

inside... THE PUNDIT LOOKS AT APPLES • FALL MERCHANDISING • MICHIGAN APPLES • NEW YORK APPLES • CHILEAN AVOCADOS
CALIFORNIA GRAPES • IDAHO POTATOES • REGIONAL MARKET PROFILES: PHILADELPHIA, TWIN CITIES & DETROIT • PERUVIAN ONIONS
TRANSPORTATION • POTATO MERCHANDISING • PEARS • LEAFY GREENS • PISTACHIOS • SUSTAINABLE FLORAL MARKETING

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producebusiness

MARKETING • MERCHANDISING • MANAGEMENT • PROCUREMENT

AISLE by AISLE

Booth Review

STARTS ON
PAGE 103

Produce Plays Integral Role In GREEN STORES

"Overall, as we look to the future for our produce, we are moving toward locally relevant, energy-efficient and high-quality produce offerings, with more of a farmers' market look and feel."

— Tom McIntyre, Supervalu



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COVER STORY

PRODUCE PLAYS INTEGRAL ROLE IN GREEN STORES

By creating LEED-certified stores and initiating sustainability initiatives in the produce department, some of the country's most prominent retailers are taking the reins in operating green businesses, while looking closer at vendor relationships. **18**

COMMENTARY

THE FRUITS OF THOUGHT

The End Of Homogenization. **10**

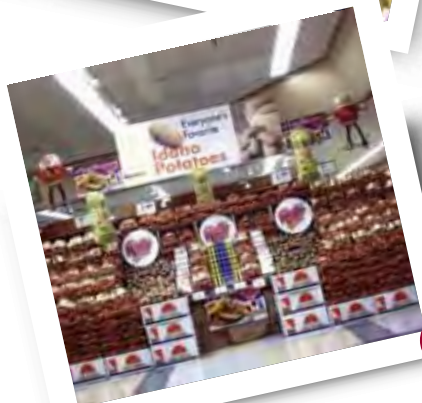
RETAIL PERSPECTIVE

Salads In Stress. **168**

EUROPEAN MARKET

Where Is The Fresh Produce Industry Headed? **170**

57



62

FEATURES

32

FALL MERCHANDISING TIPS AND TRICKS **32**

Take advantage of holidays, new harvest and special events to push produce in new and creative ways.

MAKE WAY FOR MICHIGAN APPLES **40**

Michigan apple growers are optimistic about good supplies of quality fruit, despite a spring freeze.

NEW YORK APPLES: A LOCAL, SEASONAL FAVORITE FOR CONSUMERS AND RETAILERS **45**

With plenty of varieties to please consumers and a built-in local following, New York apples are poised to take the produce department by storm.

FALL IS THE RIPE TIME TO PROMOTE AVOCADOS FROM CHILE **52**

With ample volumes to promote, take advantage of two-size programs, cross-merchandising tactics and displays geared toward Game Day.

SMART PROMOTIONS WILL MOVE CALIFORNIA FALL GRAPES **57**

New varieties help enhance appeal.

IDAHO POTATOES: READY TO SOAR BACK AFTER PLENTY OF PRESSURE **62**

Cautious optimism is the tone of the times as Idaho potato growers, packers and shippers prepare for the 2010 harvest starting — probably — in September.

PERUVIAN ONIONS HOLD THEIR OWN **131**

Peruvian onions are proving they are much more than simply a stand-in for Vidalias.

THE CHANGING TIDE OF TRANSPORTATION **138**

Still recovering from the economic slump and facing tighter government regulations, transportation companies find new ways to keep customers happy.



45



131



IN EVERY ISSUE

THE QUIZ	6
WASHINGTON GRAPEVINE	8
PRODUCE WATCH	12
RESEARCH PERSPECTIVES	16
COMMENTS AND ANALYSIS	17
FLORAL WATCH	165
INFORMATION SHOWCASE	172
BLAST FROM THE PAST	174

SPECIAL SECTION

AISLE *by* AISLE

Booth  *Review*

STARTS ON PAGE 103



DEPARTMENTS

MERCHANDISING REVIEWS:	
<i>Questions For The Potato Merchandiser</i>	144
The potato, perhaps one of the most overlooked commodities in the produce department, offers consistent sales and margins. With this in mind, perhaps it is time to re-evaluate retail merchandising of the potato category by asking some specific questions.	
<i>Pear Merchandising Challenges And Opportunities</i>	151
Education, price promotions and eye-catching displays help sell this impulse purchase.	
<i>Leafy Greens — The Quiet Powerhouse</i>	158
Education and recipes are key sales drivers in introducing leafy greens to consumers.	
DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS:	
<i>Consumers Go Nuts For Pistachios</i>	163
With a focus on the added health benefits of pistachios, retailers find they can't keep the nut from flying off shelves.	

FLORAL AND FOLIAGE MARKETING:	
<i>Sustainability: Enlightening And Motivating Floral Customers</i>	166
Forward-thinking floral executives are seeking ways to capture prospective customers as the world progresses toward a more environmentally and socially responsible future.	

SPECIAL FEATURES

FROM THE PAGES OF THE PERISHABLE PUNDIT	
<i>What To Do About Bad Apples</i>	9

PHILADELPHIA MARKET PROFILE:	
NEW MARKET PAVES WAY FOR NEW GROWTH IN PHILADELPHIA ...	79
A new state-of-the art facility returns Philadelphia to a leadership role in wholesale markets.	

<i>Philadelphia Foodservice Profile: bibou [BYOB]</i>	96
Personal focus with personally selected ingredients — more than 50 percent of the menu incorporates produce.	

<i>Philadelphia Retail Profile: Thomas Family Markets</i>	98
Driving produce sales by offering value.	

MINNEAPOLIS MARKET PROFILE:	
HOW THE TWIN CITIES STAY ON TOP	119
Wholesalers respond to evolving business climate and diverse population in the Twin Cities.	

DETROIT MARKET PROFILE:	
PRODUCE COMPANIES OPTIMISTIC IN DETROIT	126
With a bevy of independent retailers and its close proximity to Canada, the Motor City is overcoming its challenges with a thriving produce business.	



SAVE THE DATE!



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NOVEMBER 9-11, 2010
NEW YORK CITY

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THIS MONTH'S WINNER:



Luis Trinidad
Fresh Manager
Seafood City Supermarket
Panorama, CA

How To Win

To win the PRODUCE BUSINESS Quiz, the first thing you have to do is enter. The rules are simple: Read through the articles and advertisements in this issue to find the answers. Fill in the blanks corresponding to the questions below, and either cut along the dotted line or photocopy the page, and send your answers along with a business card or company letterhead to the address listed on the coupon. The winner will be chosen by drawing from the responses received before the publication of our November issue of PRODUCE BUSINESS. The winner must agree to submit a color photo to be published in that issue.

In addition to holding the position of fresh manager, Luis Trinidad is also the store manager of Seafood City Supermarket, a family-owned chain with 18 stores spread out in California and Nevada, as well as one in Seattle, WA. "As you can imagine, I am pretty busy on a daily basis," says Trinidad, who has been with the company since 2005. "I initially came in as grocery manager and worked my way up the ranks."

Trinidad used to work in corporate retail, but the "opportunities and challenges" brought him into the supermarket business. "I like the hands-on experience of the job. Plus, I'm a people-person, so I really enjoy dealing with our customers."

Thanks to a savvy customer, Trinidad has been reading PRODUCE BUSINESS for about a year. "One of my customers actually gave me my first issue," he recalls. "She used to be in the produce business, and she told me it would be very helpful. She was right on the money. The magazine keeps me up to date with what new products are on the market," he continues. "I try to recommend them for the store and put in a good word with the buying department."

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QUESTIONS FOR THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE

- 1) Name three flavors of Otria, Marzetti's Greek yogurt dip. _____
- 2) What varieties of organic produce does Source Organic represent? _____
- 3) How much money is Tanimura & Antle giving away each week in November and December? _____
- 4) What farm grows produce for Riveridge Produce Marketing Inc.? _____
- 5) In 2009, what percentage of all U.S.-produced corrugated containers was reclaimed for recycling? _____
- 6) What is the PMA booth number for Sunrise Growers? _____

This issue was: ☐ Personally addressed to me ☐ Addressed to someone else

Name _____ Position _____

Company _____

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Phone _____ Fax _____

Photocopies of this form are acceptable. Please send answers to:
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WASHINGTON GRAPEVINE

A report on the inside happenings of government.

A Q&A SESSION WITH ROB NEENAN, VICE PRESIDENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS & SUSTAINABILITY • UNITED FRESH PRODUCE ASSOCIATION



Sustainability Moving Forward

As United Fresh members return to their businesses following the annual Washington Public Policy Conference this month, the association has charged them with carrying the mantle of public policy progress throughout the year. In much the same way, the United Fresh Foundation's Center for Global Produce Sustainability has been entrusted to help move the industry toward a more sustainable future. Patrick Delaney, communications manager at United Fresh, sat down with Rob Neenan to talk about the current landscape and what's ahead.

PD: *Why should a produce company consider developing a sustainability program?*

RN: A number of growers are concerned about potential mandates that may come from their customers regarding sustainability. I would like to emphasize two points about sustainability programs. Programs should first and foremost be voluntary; and second, programs should add values to growers' operations. The concept of sustainability is not consistent with a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach. Businesses should not implement a sustainability program just because their neighbor is doing it to gain competitive advantage or because it is the latest business management trend.

The most impressive sustainability success stories come from firms that were determined to examine every aspect of their business to find innovative ways to cut costs, improve products, minimize environmental issues and provide a positive story about their business to stakeholders. Sustainability can be a central organizing platform to become more competitive, and many firms are looking to incorporate sustainability into their business planning.

PD: *Will consumers pay more for sustainable fruits and vegetables?*

RN: We don't have a lot of data to state with any confidence if — or how much — consumers will pay more for sustainable produce. Opinion surveys indicate that con-

sumers are very concerned about environmental issues and how their products are grown, but some of those same surveys also show that price and quality are still the main factors that guide buying decisions by shoppers. Will consumers pay a premium for sustainable products, or will they simply come to expect that everything they buy meets a certain threshold of sustainability? The marketplace will be where these issues are resolved and the process will be interesting to observe.

PD: *What is the mission of United's Center for Global Produce Sustainability?*

RN: Our mission is to identify and analyze key trends and issues related to sustainability that may affect the produce supply chain; define what sustainability means for the produce sector, based on sound scientific principles and modern farm management practices; provide information and resources to United's members to assist them with developing and implementing cost-effective sustainability programs; and communicate with policy makers, consumers and other stakeholders about agricultural sustainability issues. The Center will be the focal point for United's efforts regarding sustainability, and we will be forming an advisory committee to help guide the Center's activities and shape policy initiatives.

PD: *Is United Fresh participating in the development of the Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops, and what is the objective of that effort?*

RN: The Stewardship Index for Specialty Crops is a multi-stakeholder initiative that is developing a system for measuring sustainable performance. The objective is to provide growers with standard tools that can be used to benchmark and compare performance in a number of areas such as energy and water use, greenhouse gas emissions, worker safety and others.

United Fresh has been a contributing participant in the Stewardship Index activities and is one of the members of the Coordinating Council that is guiding the develop-

ment of the sustainability metrics. Only a few growers have been actively involved, and United Fresh encourages others to participate to ensure that the final product reflects the concerns and needs of a broad spectrum of conventional farming operations. United's goal is to ensure that the metrics are based on sound science; can be implemented in a cost effective manner; and are consistent with conventional farming practices.

PD: *Are other groups developing third-party sustainability certification programs for growers?*

RN: Numerous groups around the world are developing sustainability programs for growers. We are concerned that soon, there may be a proliferation of competitive standards and third-party certification organization, which may impose new costs, paperwork and conflicting requirements on growers.

PD: *How many produce growers have been certified as sustainable?*

RN: Based on our review, it appears that only a few U.S. growers are currently participating in third-party sustainability certification programs. However, a number of operations have developed their own internal programs and are benchmarking their own performance from year to year.

PD: *How will United provide information to the produce industry regarding the Center's activities and general sustainability issues?*

RN: United will soon be unveiling the Center's new Web site, which will provide a link to a wide array of information about sustainability. As the Center moves forward, we anticipate conducting workshops and working on policy initiatives to define and promote sustainability in the produce sector. We have a lot of work to do and we are excited about the opportunities that may be available for growers.

For more information on the Center for Global Produce Sustainability and all of United's work on this emerging industry issue, contact Rob at 202-303-3400 or rneenan@unitedfresh.org.

What To Do About Bad Apples

From Jim Prevor's Perishable Pundit
July 27, 2010



Our piece, *We Have Our Own Selves To Blame For Poor Growth in Consumption*, brought many notes, including this knowledgeable respondent:

Did you think that I would not have something to say about your Toy Story apple tale? It reminds me of the strategy behind the Happy Meal — push the toy to sell the meat. Excellent marketing concept that set the standard for marketing to children decades ago... but, of course, the huge difference is that McDonald's seldom disappoints the customer with poor quality fries and burgers!

Sometimes, the Chinese made the laser shooting right arm of the Luke Skywalker not bend, but the cookie always delighted! Mimicking this practice with a perishable apple and possible improper handling can spell "risky."

Without placing blame, you did hit on a number of reasons why you were not delighted with the purchase, except for the neat box! Apples tend to bounce around in a container such as you described, and certainly at certain times of the year, the apple may react differently to the bounce. Top that off with the difficulty of seeing beyond Woody's cowboy hat to get an unobstructed view of the apple, well you were virtually buying blind!

You're most accurate assessment and the quote from Frieda Caplan about the lack of refrigeration is likely a huge factor on fruit condition. Not only the lack of refrigeration, but the enclosed container under high intensity lighting at the point of display can only reduce the shelf-life of apples.

From harvest to delivery to the DC, an enormous amount of money has been invested to keep those apples under refrigeration, and then to subject them to "heat lamps" on the store floor can lead to disaster. Not only does it cook the fruit, it sends the opposite message to the consumer.

If they are going to write so much on the box, they should make some room for "Keep Refrigerated!"

Displaying fresh apples is not quite the same as displaying house wares and sneakers, so the execution of the display must meet the needs of the merchandise.

— Jim Allen

President, New York Apple Association Inc.
Fishers, NY

Jim is a tireless worker on behalf of his growers. The Pundit and Mr. Allen bravely endured the perils of communism down in Cuba, as he fought to get his growers a prominent market position. So, logically, he can't be and shouldn't be indifferent to a marketing chain that allows

consumer disappointment with the product.

Indeed this attractive box, which, undeniably, was the motivator for purchase, has the side effect of removing geographic and even varietal distinctions between apples. The box prominently highlights "Apples!" and the various *Toy Story* characters. Indeed, the only mention of origin or variety is a tiny white sticker, 1½ inches wide by ¾-inch tall, with the letters "WA EX FCY" on the top line and "GALA" on the bottom line. Because the white sticker is placed on a white portion of the box, the sticker doesn't stand out, and because it is written in "industryese" — how many consumers know what "WA EX FCY" means? — they really are selling a generic apple, which means, of course, consumer dissatisfaction with the product could easily rub off on other apples.

Indeed, a large shipper in Washington sent this simple comment:

There is no excuse for consumer disappointment. I apologize for my industry. Shame on the shipper of these apples.

So the problem is serious, and contributing factors can be easily identified:

1. Shippers can be shipping poor quality and the system does not really preclude that.

2. Packaging can be done for sales impact, but not product protection. Could these little boxes be done with tray packs or something that will better protect the fruit?

3. Attractive packaging can promote sales, but lead to dissatisfaction if it obscures the condition of the fruit.

4. Communicating proper care-and-handling information both to the trade and to the consumer is crucial.

5. If items that normally require refrigeration are to be sold out of refrigeration at all, it is essential that it be done judiciously. What is the product condition? What is the speed of movement? Jim Allen mentions McDonald's... years ago McDonalds used to pre-cook its sandwiches. It also marked them so they would be thrown out after a predetermined time. Perhaps each case put on display out of refrigeration should be marked with a sticker and if it is not sold by that time, be discarded.

The question is what to do about all this. It is in everyone's long-term interest to fix these problems and in everyone's short-term interest to bang the fruit out. This is a quandary that made last year's debate over the generic promotion of produce so problematic. Produce is highly variable in quality, yet generic promotion serves to "brand it" as a unity.

It reminds us of the currency crisis in Greece and the Euro. It is hard to have a common currency if each country is able to have its own fiscal policies. It is hard to have a common promotional program if every shipper and every retailer has different acceptable levels of quality.

This is a quandary that made last year's debate over the generic promotion of produce so problematic. Produce is highly variable in quality, yet generic promotion serves to "brand it" as a unity.



The End Of Homogenization

This year, at the upcoming Produce Marketing Association Convention, we begin the celebration of the 25th anniversary of PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine.

As part of that process, we've been surveying the industry as to what events and trends most shaped the last quarter-century and what is likely to shape the next.

Chris Nelson, the President and CEO of the MIXTEC Group, was the first to suggest to us that consolidation was one of the key trends of the last 25 years. There is certainly no denying that he is correct.

Whether it was the organic growth of Wal-Mart rolling Supercenters across the country, or chains such as Safeway and Kroger doing a roll-up on regional chains, consolidation has been a defining characteristic of the age.

More intriguing, though, is what this means for the next 25 years. One of the most dangerous things to do in business is to extrapolate. The obvious facts are that consolidation brings efficiency, and efficiency brings lower cost; and lower cost allows for lower prices, which leads to larger market share, which causes the system to become further consolidated. It is a cycle that never ends.

Unless, of course, it does end.

Herbert Stein was an economist, the head of the Council of Economic Advisors under Presidents Nixon and Ford (he also is father of Ben Stein of *Ferris Bueller* fame), and he was famous for saying: "If something cannot go on forever, then it will stop."

Perhaps an example of this is found in the whole "locavore" movement, which is less about all the specific reasons given for the phenomenon — carbon footprints, food miles and what not — than it is about a society saying, *en masse* "Stop." A society saying that we want an end to the homogenization of the modern world.

The challenge is to see beyond the immediate reaction to identify how reality will shape itself in the years to come. The drive for efficiency drives consolidation and the world needs efficiency. Yearnings for rootedness, a connection to the land and admiration for the artisan drives the demand for small scale and local, and the world needs to help fill the souls of people.

The zeitgeist of the age will always rule, and the zeitgeist ahead of us is profoundly conservative. In our politics, it is assumed that conservatism and capitalism go together, for that is the coalition that the Republicans have formed. In fact, though, capitalism is profoundly hostile to conservatism. It creates giant waves of change, disrupting settled interests and the manners and mores of society.

The zeitgeist is best seen as a reaction to the consolidation. If you were to blindfold people and take them to any one of a hundred giant shopping malls, few could tell what city they are in. The same

can be said about airports or convention centers. Even the supposedly responsive architecture exhibited in the new generation of baseball stadiums is all the same.

When society transitioned from an artisan and small farmer society to a manufacturing society, the objection was that human beings would lose their autonomy. The future of democracy was, itself, held in question. After all, a small farmer who had to think in order to effectively plant, tend, harvest and market his crop was capable of exercising independent judgment, and thus, of effectively voting. But a man whose whole day was spent on an assembly line would have no chance to practice independent judgment, so such skills would atrophy and he would not be fit to vote. This is what

the famous Charlie Chaplin film *Modern Times* was all about.

Now, as we transition to the knowledge-based economy where only a fraction of the people are on those assembly lines, the threat may be to consolidated capitalism. If once the question was how can people not accustomed to exercising judgment vote with judgment, now the issue may be how can people super-stimulated from birth — with over-parenting, over-schooling, on to employment that must always be stimulating — how could these people be asked to eat undifferentiated food and shop in undifferentiated venues?

They cannot and they will not. But neither can they give up the economies of scale that consolidation brings. Herman Kahn, the great futurist, was famous for explaining that the reason it is hard to predict the future is that if we knew how we would do things in the future, we

would do them that way now.

The best bet is that many of the most interesting and important insights will not in the future come on a national or international scale; that to garner many crucial insights you need to get local, you need to get close to the market.

After a quarter-century of surveying the scene both locally and nationally, it became clear that insight could be gained by getting close, close to many who never get to go to PMA or Fruit Logistica. This led those of us here at PRODUCE BUSINESS to seek out a regional trade group, the Eastern Produce Council and favor the establishment of The New York Produce Show and Conference.

In this region, in this city — a place filled with people, buying power and creative energy — the conference will create a node of connection and feedback between local ideas and national and international executors of ideas. The future will be built on the interchange of such people and ideas. I hope you'll consider being part of the future by joining us in New York. You can learn more at NYProduceShow.com

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undifferentiated
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Reader Service # 1

APIO INC. GUADALUPE, CA

Cali Tanguay has been promoted to the new position of director of marketing and technology. She reports to Apio's CEO, Ron Midyett. Cali has 10 years of experience in marketing, technology and business management. She joined Apio in 2004 after working on the Sunkist brand at Paramount Farms.



MANN PACKING COMPANY INC. SALINAS, CA

John Haydock has been hired as senior vice president of sales. He has spent his entire career in the food business, and began as a sales representative in 1980 with American Home Food Products. Most recently, John led the natural foods division of Michael Angelo's Gourmet Foods.



RPE BANCROFT, WI

Shannon Casey has joined RPE-Colorado, the latest expansion of RPE in Monte Vista, CO. He will oversee sales. His leadership will rapidly get the Colorado office up and running and create broader access points for all the company's customers.



Shawna Casey has also joined RPE-Colorado, and will handle customer support. In addition to RPE's full line, RPE-Colorado will be the sales agent for Hi-Land Potato Co., which specializes in Colorado Russets and other specialties.



THE GIUMARRA COMPANIES LOS ANGELES, CA

Gary Sargent has been named head of the new Giumarra Southeast Division in Boca Raton, FL. He previously worked with Giumarra's West Coast Chilean Division. He was also a buyer with Kroger and recently employed with Southern Specialties.



Ben Reilly has been named Midwest business development manager to Giumarra's marketing department in Nogales, AZ. He came to Giumarra from the PMA FIT program and recently worked with Giumarra's VBM berry division.



NEW PRODUCTS

STAND-UP GRAPE BAGS

J. Dulcich & Sons, McFarland, CA, has launched a new stand-up bag that acts as a disposable colander for its Pretty Lady Table Grapes. The new bag allows for easy rinsing and storing. Dulcich and Sunlight International Sales, Dulcich's marketing arm, are also providing matching display bins, shelf-danglers and other merchandising products.



Reader Service No. 301

100 PERCENT POMEGRANATE JUICE

Bolthouse Farms, Bakersfield, CA, has introduced 100 percent Pomegranate Juice that delivers a flavorful, just-off-the-tree taste by using a proprietary juice blend and bottling process. The 100 percent juice comes in a 52-oz. bottle and is available in grocery and health-food stores nationwide.



Reader Service No. 302

WALTER P. RAWL REFRESHES COMPANY LOGO

Walter P. Rawl & Sons, Pelion, SC, has updated its logo to fit a more corporate look. The new logo focuses on a field and the rising sun as a reflection of the organization's tagline, "Our business is growing." This tagline aligns with the company's continued focus on vertical integration.



Reader Service No. 303

SCHNUCKS, FRIEDA'S PARTNER ON SUMMER MELON PROMOTION

Schnuck Markets Inc., St. Louis, MO, hosted a Frieda's Produce University promotion for a hands-on educational event about summer melons. The 8-hour open house took place at all Schnucks and Logli locations in the Midwest, and provided consumers an opportunity to sample and ask questions about the featured melons.



Reader Service No. 304

CALAVO GROWERS ADDS MID- SOUTH SHIPPING POINT

Calavo Growers, Santa Paula, CA, announced The Horton Fruit Co., Louisville, KY, as its mid-South shipping point. The Horton Fruit shipping point is crucial to Calavo's distribution of value-added fresh products. The company will help provide next-day delivery, cold chain management and desired ripe avocado levels.



Reader Service No. 305

DRISCOLL'S, OLSEN BROS., WYCKOFF FARMS TEAM UP

Driscoll's, Watsonville, CA, has partnered with Olsen Brothers Farms, Prosser, WA, and Wyckoff Farms, Grandview, WA. This venture was celebrated at the grand opening of a new packinghouse for fresh blueberries in Grandview, WA. The new facility features the latest technologies in packing equipment.



Reader Service No. 306

Produce Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, Produce Business, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com



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VILLAGE FARMS OPENS NEW DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Village Farms, Eatontown, NJ, has opened a new distribution center with value-added packaging capabilities in New Castle, DE. This 30,000-square-foot facility is in close proximity to Village Farm's South, Mid-Atlantic and New England core markets.



Reader Service No. 307

FRUIT PATCH ANNOUNCES NEW SPECIALTY LINE

Fruit Patch Inc., Dinuba, CA, will install a state-of-the-art pomegranate and specialty citrus line for the 2010-11 season. In addition to pomegranates, Fruit Patch will also offer Clementines, Satsumas, Cara Cara and Blood Oranges.



Reader Service No. 308

ZESPRI CELEBRATES A CENTURY OF KIWIFRUIT

Zespri, Redwood City, CA, has launched a grower section on its North American Web site in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first kiwifruit harvest in New Zealand. In-depth bios, photos and videos showcase Zespri conventional and organic growers of both Green and Gold Kiwifruit.



Reader Service No. 309

MASTRONARDI SUNSET WINS SIX AWARDS

Mastronardi Produce/Sunset, Kingsville, ON, Canada, received top honors at the 2010 Hottest Tomato Competition for the third year in a row. The six awards included Best Cocktail, Best Bite Size, Best Specialty, Best Roma, The People's Choice Award and the Best Overall Tomato.



Reader Service No. 310

MUCCI PAC/FARMS TO APPEAR ON LIFETIME TV

Mucci/Pac Farms, Kingsville, ON, Canada, and the greenhouse industry will be featured on Lifetime Television's *The Balancing Act*. The company will utilize the appearance to educate the public on greenhouse vegetables and promote the Mucci brand.



Reader Service No. 311

SUREHARVEST CONDUCTS STUDY ON SUSTAINABLE FARMING

SureHarvest Inc., Soquel, CA, conducted a survey of California pear farmers. Research showed that the California pear industry has a very high level of adoption of using sustainable farming practices, such as daily scouting for pests to reduce spray applications and utilizing non-toxic pheromone treatments in place of pesticides.



Reader Service No. 312

CRUNCH PAK CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Crunch Pak, Cashmere, WA, is celebrating 10 years of business. The success of its experience in the sliced apples industry came about when Crunch Pak founders Tony Freytag, the late Craig Carson and John Graden worked with NatureSeal/Mantrose, Westport, CT, to develop the technology needed to keep an apple fresh after it was sliced.



Reader Service No. 313

CAMEO APPLE IMPLEMENTS NEW MARKETING STRATEGY

Cameo Apple Marketing Association (CAMA), Wenatchee, WA, is officially positioning Cameo to be the leader of the late-season apple category. CAMA is working with growers and packers to harvest and store the fruit to offer optimal crunch and overall eating quality for the late season.



Reader Service No. 314

COLORADO PROMOTES STATE-GROWN BROCCOLI

The Colorado Department of Agriculture, Lakewood, CO, has selected broccoli as its commodity of the month for August. Each month, the department features a different commodity to highlight the variety and quality of products grown, raised or processed in the state. Recipes for Colorado broccoli are available on its Web site.



Reader Service No. 315

FRESH HASS AVOCADO KNOW-HOW

The Hass Avocado Board (HAB), Irvine, CA, estimates that more than 1 billion pounds of fresh Hass avocados will be distributed in the United States throughout 2010. To help foodservice operators add year-round variety and interest to the menu with fresh Hass avocados, HAB is offering a free Culinary Instruction Kit CD packed with nutritional information.



Reader Service No. 316

FFR-DSI'S HOLIDAY MERCHANDISING GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

FFR-DSI's, Twinsburg, OH, *Free Holiday Merchandising Guide* is now available for download. The guide offers tips and tricks to refresh retailers' seasonal merchandising and to increase consumers' holiday basket.



Reader Service No. 317

MANN PACKING, HEFTY TEAM UP TO MAKE HEALTHY LUNCHES

Mann Packing Co. Inc., Salinas, CA, and Hefty, part of the Pactiv Corp. family, Lake Forest, IL, have joined forces to help parents provide convenient, affordable and nutritious lunches this back-to-school season. From mid-August through mid-September, 1 million \$1-off IRCs will be applied to select Mann Packing vegetables with the purchase of two packages of Hefty OneZip sandwich bags.



Reader Service No. 318

Correction: In our July issue, we indicated the Washington Market was located on the East side of New York City. It was actually located on the West side of the City. We regret the error.

Produce Watch is a regular feature of Produce Business. Please send information on new products, personnel changes, industry, corporate and personal milestones and available literature, along with a color photo, slide or transparency to: Managing Editor, Produce Business, P.O. Box 810425, Boca Raton, FL 33481-0425, or e-mail us at info@producebusiness.com

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Fast-Casual Gains Dollars And Units By Focusing On Healthful Consumer Choices

Q&A With Darren Tristano, Executive Vice President, Technomic by Mira Slott

Q: How do you define Fast-Casual Restaurants (FCR)?

A: Fast-casual is not very well defined in the marketplace. We have a general view, though, and it includes establishments with a limited-service or self-service format, no drive-through, food made-to-order at the counter, often brought to the table, fresh (or perceived fresh) ingredients, innovative food suited to sophisticated tastes, upscale interiors and price points between \$7 to \$11 dollars per person.

Q: What role does produce play, and where are the opportunities?

A: The way fast-casual has succeeded is with freshness, and produce is a big part of that. Consumers from our research have reacted that fresh is better for you. Produce provides freshness, variety and enhanced flavors; infused in burgers, novel sandwiches, creative toppings on pizzas, and more center-of-the-plate with salads. Vegetarian restaurants are starting to grow in the fast-casual space, as are all chains classified as healthy.

Look for offerings lower in sodium; new gluten-free ingredients, multigrain breads and baked goods; more vegan/vegetarian options; and local produce for use in salads and sandwiches. Additionally, now that laws in some states are requiring restaurants to post calorie counts, more menus will tout lighter, lower-calorie and lower-fat versions of signature entrées.

Local has usurped organic, which was popular for years, and is a trendy term in the FCR arena. Everyone wants to support the

local concept, and it's crazy how strong it's become. Panera Bread/Saint Louis Bread Co., which doesn't specialize in salads, is using strawberries right now in its salads, embracing the strategy of rotating seasonal produce into its offerings. Pret a Manger has driven European-style grab 'n go that is made fresh on the premises.

Q: How has the economy impacted this segment in the context of restaurants overall?

A: The big news is that in spite of the economy and larger fast food chains, fast casual has doubled its share size and continues to grow when a number of chains are struggling and having trouble finding their identity. Consumers want better, more healthful food, so they're trading up to fast-casual, while trading down from full-service. And the longer it takes to get the economy moving, we're going to continue to eat at fast-casual.

Restaurants like Panera and Chipotle have skyrocketed in both sales and units; \$350,000 can open up a Five Guys Burgers and Fries, so it's easily franchised and increasingly stealing shares from other restaurants. Still, fast-casual only represents 5 percent of the total industry so it has plenty of room to grow. Limited service is relatively flat; full-service has declined; and yet fast-casual is up 4.5 percent.

Consumers perceive fast-casual as a good value. They can customize toppings on their burgers, pizza, or burritos, and choose fresh ingredients in their sandwiches. Quality of toppings is visible, and they're interacting with the person making their food. Consumers interpret fresh as better and more flavorful, and in the fast-casual format they can see it is not processed or frozen.

Q: What food categories in fast casual are most popular?

A: Across the board, the biggest growth came from burgers, really driven by Five Guys Burgers and Fries. They've become specialists in made-fresh and made-to-order burgers and fries. Traditional fast food lost focus on burgers. Culvers is popular for its frozen custard and butter burgers, which are cooked to order. McDonalds won't ever get to that point. As far as ethnic trends, we've seen a much more traditional approach, and most ethnic chains are Americanized versions.

Q: What advice do you have for produce executives wanting to capitalize on the fast-casual boom?

A: One challenge is how to maintain and promote fresh produce during colder seasons, especially up north, when there is no local produce. Five Guys does it by telling consumers where the potatoes come from in each restaurant, featuring the location in friendly signage, and relaying a bond with suppliers. We're all willing to pay a little more if we're comfortable the product is safe and we know its origins.

Sweet potato fries are a trend, but ultimately, creating demand means limiting certain product and not overproducing. Otherwise, you risk the Krispy Kreme affect. When the consumers could only get Krispy Kreme donuts in a few places, they were perceived as special and unique, but when they appeared everywhere people stopped wanting them.

Q: What are your future predictions?

A: Over the next two to three years fast-casual will continue grabbing shares from full service, growing and outperforming the industry as a whole. We're seeing shifts to that segment from fast food; McDonald's improved price points and atmosphere. In full service, chains are putting in drive-through windows and creating fast-casual concepts. Those that aren't fast-casual want to be.

Technomic Inc. is a fact-based consulting firm that serves a broad and diverse base of domestic and international clients, including major manufacturing, distribution and supermarket companies, as well as chain restaurants and other food-service operators. The company uses its proprietary research, forecasts, common-interest studies, online databases and reports on consumer and menu trends to fuel clients' business and marketing plans.

Can The Produce Industry Rely On Fast Casual To Boost Consumption?

The fast casual phenomenon is, to some extent, a matter of creating a new category so that one can lead it. So Five Guys is not an infinitesimal burger chain behind McDonald's, Wendy's, Burger King and a dozen others but, instead, is a leader in "fast casual." Equally, the growth of fast casual is impressive, but only because it starts from such a low base.

One reason fast casual is the focus of so much attention is because its emphasis on fresh, varied ingredients, more upscale décor and higher price points than fast food corresponds perfectly with the aspirations of journalists, professors and other knowledge-class workers anxious to differentiate themselves from the *hoi polloi* buying lunch at Subway or McDonald's.

This is not to say that there isn't a market here and, of course, produce vendors should pay attention and competitors should look at what these chains are offering. Still, we would see the development of these chains as akin to the growth of alternative retail formats. Just as a supermarket's competition today is not just another supermarket but dozens of new formats and old formats featuring food that takes a slice of the business, so McDonald's doesn't just have to compete with a Burger King but has to deal with chains hitting it both on the premium and discount point.

At just 4.5 percent of the market, even if these chains over-index on produce usage by, say, 20 percent, they still would account for only just over 5 percent of produce usage in the restaurant business.

We did find Darren Tristano's comments on Five Guy's potato program intriguing, as they pointed to the way authenticity — the notion that these potatoes came from the right place — could outweigh any demand for local. Indeed, even the fact that Panera and others were adding strawberries to a summer salad menu struck us less as about consumer demand for local than about the desire to type

the salads as seasonal and fresh.

The ubiquity of a product — note the rapidly expanding sweet potato category — strikes us as less likely to reduce demand than the product's potential quality problems. Krispy Kreme donuts developed a cult following because each store had a neon sign advertising that the hot donuts were "hot now." So Krispy Kreme offered a product — hot donuts just out of the oven — that other donut chains did not. So when the chain expanded, we doubt that the problem would have been excessive availability of delicious hot donuts. What happened was that they started selling donuts in supermarkets and they no longer had any competitive advantage.

Though fast casual will grow, it can't grow too much. This is because other competitors would look to seize market share if that price point grows to a much bigger share of the market. If fast casual continues to grow, the best bet would be that chains both more economical and more expensive would edge into this middle category. Look at McDonald's efforts to seize the gourmet coffee business with its McCafé line as a clue to what might happen here.

The point that new laws may lead restaurants to offer and highlight more produce-rich items is undoubtedly true, but whether it will lead consumers to order these items is another thing entirely. Having McDonald's offer salads is a win for the produce industry, and helps McDonald's divert criticism that it is a casual link in the growing girth of Americans. Still, it is a sobering thought to remind ourselves that if the highest selling salad was a burger, it would be discontinued for inadequate sales.

Although doubtlessly true, we might qualify the notion that consumers classify fast casual as a good value. We might say that those consumers *who choose to eat at fast casual restaurants* see them as offering good value. The vast majority of consumers who shop at limited service restaurants seem to think the value meal at

We would see the development of these chains as akin to the growth of alternative retail formats.

the fast food places is a good value.

Although consumers report — and Technomic confirms — that consumers value fresh produce, we hear a different story from most operators. We continue to hear from mainstream restaurateurs who track consumer comments and purchasing that scarcely any of those comments refer to side dishes. It is the quality and quantity of the protein component of the meal that attracts lots of compliments, criticism and purchasing.

This leads to the two-spears-of-asparagus-and-a-cherry-tomato phenomenon. Basically, because protein is the focus for Americans, this is where the food cost budget is typically placed. Then, although produce is less expensive than protein, starches are less expensive than produce. So, with the food budget busted on protein, menu planners turn to starches to fill up the plate. This relegates produce to an accent and provider of color. Thus, one often receives a large steak, a mountain of mashed potatoes and two asparagus spears with a cherry tomato.

There are exceptions, of course, and some chains seize that niche that values fresh produce. The question now is how the industry can grow that market. In all likelihood, that growth will come through more produce usage in larger market segments not counting on niche concepts to seize the mass market.

Produce Plays Integral Role In GREEN STORES

By creating LEED-certified stores and initiating sustainability initiatives in the produce department, some of the country's most prominent retailers are taking the reins in operating green businesses, while looking closer at vendor relationships.

BY LISA WHITE



These days, saving the planet can be equated to saving money. A number of sustainable initiatives, such as conserving energy, recycling and water reclamation, are helping retailers reduce their operating costs over the long term. This means that it is not just trendy to operate a green business, it also is practical.

An increasing number of chains are creating LEED-certified locations (see sidebar for information on LEED certification) and incorporating sustainability initiatives into produce departments. The return is not only helping the environment, but also creating a more positive image for chains and their produce departments.

Meanwhile, the chains are partnering with vendors and adopting more locally grown initiatives, while further examining packaging options to reduce the carbon footprint.

Why LEED?

Pleasanton, CA-based Safeway Inc., winner of PRODUCE BUSINESS' 2010 Retail Sustainability Award, built a LEED-gold certified location in Santa Cruz, CA, this past summer. "Our Santa Cruz store is based on our prototype design," says Jim Gibbon, architectural coordinator, corporate construction and design for the 1,000-plus-store chain. "We didn't create something totally different for LEED; it's identical to our Lifestyle store model."

This wasn't new territory for the chain.



"Overall, as we look to the future for our produce, we are moving toward locally relevant, energy-efficient and high-quality produce offerings, with more of a farmers' market look and feel."

— Tom McIntyre, Supervalu

Safeway opened another LEED store this past June in Washington, D.C. At press time, construction was underway for two new LEED-registered locations in Chicago and two others in Seattle, which will open at the end of this year. "Over the next three years, Safeway will be LEED-registering or certifying 20 stores, both new and remodeled," Gibbon says.

The chain's sustainability initiatives in the produce department include the installation of flooring that looks like hardwood, but is actually made of recyclable materials. Produce bins are made of this same material, which lasts for 20 years. Safeway also has successfully lowered light and energy levels in produce areas by utilizing spotlights, rather than fluorescent lighting. "We have lowered foot-candle levels by 50 percent," Gibbon reports. "As a result, our stores, by analysis, have 20 percent more energy reduction beyond what is allowed for our type of store."

In addition, Safeway's produce departments are taking water produced by refrigeration cases and diverting it for use in exterior irrigation. "This makes stores very sustainable in terms of landscaping and use of potable water," Gibbon points out.

Safeway produce department composting programs also have been expanded. "The program began in California, is currently being expanded to our Eastern division and, in 2011, Chicago will get on board," Gibbon details. When the program is fully implemented, 100 percent of returned produce will go back to Safeway's distribution center, where it will be composted by a third-party.

Supervalu, an Eden Prairie, MN-based chain with more than 2,300 stores, currently has seven LEED-certified stores across its retail banners, including one new gold store, one new silver location and two remodeled silver sites. "We are committed to sustainable operations and



Safeway's sustainability initiatives include the installation of faux hardwood flooring made from recyclable materials and an expanded composting program.

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WHAT IS LEED CERTIFICATION?

The U.S. Green Building Council was formed in 1993, and adopted a program to define and measure sustainable buildings. Five years later, it launched LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), a national green building rating system, which has become the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings.

To earn certification, a building project must meet certain prerequisites and performance benchmarks or credits within each category. Projects are awarded Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum certification, depending on the number of credits they achieve. LEED certification criteria is based on many aspects, including sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. **pb**

sought LEED certification to help meet our goals of using resources more efficiently, reducing waste and contributing to sustainability," says Tom McIntyre, Supervalu's director of environmental sustainability. "Working to extend our sustainability efforts to produce is another important initiative at Supervalu."

One of Supervalu's LEED stores, the Acme in Glen Mills, PA, combined environmentally friendly building practices and the incorporation of new energy-efficient LED lighting to improve its produce department. Ultra-efficient LED lighting uses less power, creates less heat and prevents ultraviolet light damage to produce. "Both heat and ultraviolet light age produce faster," says McIntyre. "Our energy-efficient lighting addresses this, reducing both the cost and waste associated with traditional lighting fixtures."

Portland, ME-based Hannaford Brothers Co., a chain with more than 170 stores, had been looking at stepping up its environmental activities in store design and operation. "In the case of Hannaford's LEED store in Augusta, ME, there was a confluence of circumstances that made this possible, says George Parmenter, the chain's corporate responsibility manager. "We were challenged by management to think and act boldly."

The Cony site in Augusta had some aspects that helped with the LEED process. It was an urban brownfield site with a disused school building that had contamination issues. The



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Reader Service # 101



"We work with all our vendors, across the store, for both LEED and traditional store designs, to incorporate materials, practices and product that would be more efficient and sustainable."

—Maria Brous, Publix Super Markets Inc.

A CLOSE ENDEAVOR

In 2008, Hannaford Brothers instituted its Close To Home program as a way to help customers more easily spot locally made and grown products. As part of this program, the chain also sought out local farming legends in order to add more locally grown-and-made items from Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York to its shelves.

Hannaford's partners include Longwind Farms in East Thetford, VT, a tomato supplier established in 1980, and Brookdale Fruit Farm, a Hollis, NH-based produce and floral supplier that has been in operation since 1847.

Hannaford Brothers' long history of working with local farmers and producers started back in 1883, when the chain got its start selling vegetables from a pushcart. The chain contends that, not only does Close To Home help discover new local legends, but it also allows Hannaford to reduce its carbon footprint by sourcing local products. **pb**

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building, which was full of lab equipment, desks and filing cabinets, had to be deconstructed methodically. Hannaford partnered with the Institutional Recycling Network, a Concord, NH, organization, which found homes for all of the equipment.

In terms of Hannaford's produce-specific initiatives, refrigeration systems use energy-efficient control schemes. Stores placed insulated nightshades on all upright refrigerated cases to maintain temperatures during off hours, which improved quality and saved energy. Sites also utilize natural lighting to save on energy during daylight hours; a green chill refrigeration system; and solar panel energy sources. In addition, consumers are given self-service recyclable bags for their bulk purchases.

"The produce misting system is the same as a standard misting system, but in our LEED store, we try to operate it at the lowest practical setting to save water," says Parmenter. With its green initiatives, Hannaford's total store reduced water consumption by over 540,000 gallons per year, according to Will Wedge, the chain's produce director.

Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Market Inc., an El Segundo, CA-based chain with more than 150 stores in California, Nevada and Arizona, currently has one LEED gold-certified location, which opened last year in Palm Springs, CA.

Here are some views of our ranch...



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Sustainability is not a new thing for us: we've been practicing it since the 1970s. We also practice food safety programs that are some of the most stringent in the industry, and social responsibility programs that have even won awards.

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"Being green not only helps the environment, but allows us to save money and pass savings on to customers," says Brendan Wonnacott, Fresh & Easy's communications director. For example, by increasing ambient light and incorporating solar tracking skylights, Fresh & Easy stores use 30 percent less energy on average than typical supermarkets.

Fresh & Easy's sustainability effort incorporates the produce department as a whole. "The system we've been able to design, particularly in the produce department, is forward-thinking and advanced," says Wonnacott. "What makes it work so well is we take a look at the systems to see how they can be changed. We've implemented reusable plastic crates, which are packed and delivered to stores. This is highly efficient from an environmental standpoint. It reduces the amount of cardboard, boxes and paper used. We also have an ultraviolet sanitation system that cleans our plastic as opposed to using water and chemicals."

Fresh & Easy's LEED store is not significantly different than its other prototype locations. "Most of the green elements of our LEED store are in most of our other stores," Wonnacott notes. "We try to incorporate as much as we can into every store we build. It simply makes sense to do so, because green



Fresh & Easy receives produce in reusable plastic crates, which are placed directly into displays, greatly reducing the amount of cardboard and boxes being used.

Photo courtesy of Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Market Inc.

stores help us keep our prices down."

Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets Inc., which has more than 1,000 locations and was the winner of the 2009 PRODUCE BUSINESS Retail Sustainability Award, opened its first gold LEED-certified store in Sarasota, FL, in April 2009. The 28,000-square-foot location was developed as part of Publix's green

initiatives, but it is not a GreenWise store, which emphasizes natural and organic products. "Our produce director and his team are always involved in planning their departments for new stores," says Maria Brous, Publix's director of media and community relations. "With or without LEED certification, the process doesn't change."

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As one of the highest-scoring LEED-certified grocery stores in the nation — 40 out of a possible 69 points — the Publix Sarasota store incorporates a variety of sustainable features, including construction waste recycling; LED light fixtures and skylights; low-emitting vehicle parking; low-flow plumbing fixtures; low VOC (volatile organic compounds) building products such as paint and adhesives; a reclaimed water system; and reflective roof systems.

All Publix stores and facilities include energy-efficient refrigeration and air-conditioning designs. A secondary coolant technology, used in many newer stores, significantly reduces the refrigerant charge, while low-temperature cases in these stores also use non-ozone depleting refrigerant.

The latest fluorescent technologies in new store designs provide up to a 50 percent lighting energy savings over traditional stores. Existing stores are being retrofitted with metal halide fixture components, which produce a high light output for their size. These improve lighting quality and generate up to a 50 percent lighting energy reduction. Publix employs an Energy Management System (EMS), which controls store lighting and turns off non-essential lighting during unoccupied hours.


LEED technology is being implemented for freezer and cooler applications at Publix as well, which will reduce energy usage by 50 to

A FOCUS ON FLORIDA

In October, 2009, Publix partnered with Miami-Dade County and the Tallahassee-based Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services *Fresh from Florida* program to promote a “buy local” initiative throughout the county and state. Focusing on items grown in the state’s Redland/Homestead area, the Redland Raised logo was created so consumers could easily identify these products at the store level.

In order for producers to be able to use the Redland Raised logo, they must be a member of the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign (FAPC), and the designated product must be grown in the Redland area. When the program was initiated last year, Redland Raised-branded green beans, yellow squash, zucchini, boniato, okra and avocados were available at all Publix stores in the state during the local growing season, which runs from November through April. In addition to providing added visibility to Florida produce, the Redland Raised program also helps growers keep transportation costs down, which reduces their carbon footprint and also results in lower prices for customers.

Miami-Dade County’s agriculture industry is number two in the state after Palm Beach County and 18th in the country, generating an estimated \$2.7 billion for the local economy.



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80 percent. Behind the scenes, LED technology illuminates walk-in coolers and freezers. Redesigned track lighting will use new high-efficiency lamps and gain up to a 70 percent energy savings. With these initiatives, Publix

electricity usage has been reduced by more than 7 percent in existing stores and by 23 percent in new store designs.

“As for product differentiation in a produce department of a LEED-certified store, the

Not to toot ou



Happy Birthday



Most of Publix's stores, including its GreenWise store in Boca Raton, FL, include energy-efficient refrigeration and air-conditioning designs.

mix remains the same," says Brous. "Publix continues to take Best Practices from LEED and more energy-efficient stores and incorporate them into new stores and remodels."

The Vendor Role

Many retailers are partnering with vendors in their sustainability efforts, especially in the produce department. Hannaford works with neighborhood farms and local businesses for many items, including produce, as part of its

Close To Home program. Developed in 2008, the program is geared to help customers more easily spot locally made and locally grown products at the store level. The program's focus is not only to reduce the chain's carbon footprint, but also to find new and innovative items. "When Hannaford opened Close to Home, local commodities in Maine were in full swing," Wedge reports. "Our greenhouse grower, Backyard Farms, provided the store with an educational display on how greenhouse tomatoes-on-the-vine are grown."

When it was instituted last year, Fresh & Easy's "Farm to Store in 24" program's goal was getting the freshest produce possible to its customers in the shortest amount of time. The chain's produce team identified local growers with whom to partner. Consequently, as much as 65 percent of its produce comes from California. "With this program, we get items such as grapes and strawberries from the farm to the stores in 24 hours," Wonnacott reveals. "We are working to expand the program to include stone fruit, along with fall and winter items. We are definitely focusing on local growers. Being in California and on the West Coast, we have access to a wealth of resources."

Fresh & Easy also works closely with suppliers to enhance its efficiency. "For example, having our produce packed and delivered to

stores in the same crates that are then put directly on the shelves is a simple way to increase our efficiency," Wonnacott says.

As part of Publix's category review process and supplier business reviews, the chain strives to learn more about its suppliers' sustainable initiatives to more easily incorporate them into their own initiatives. "We work with all our vendors, across the store, for both LEED and traditional store designs, to incorporate materials, practices and product that would be more efficient and sustainable," Brous says. However, "[it is important to note that] LEED certification and points toward it are not dependent on the amount of natural and organic products being sold," Brous says.

In an effort to support local suppliers, Publix offers products from local regions as often as possible. Although most packaged salads are sourced from the West Coast, an East Coast supplier has introduced a salad line for the chain. Publix currently offers more than 300 locally grown produce products. The chain supports the Redland Raised program in South Florida. Developed by the Tallahassee-based Florida Department of Agriculture, the program promotes produce grown in the Redlands region, located southwest of Miami, near Homestead (see sidebar on page 26 for more information on Redland Raised). The chain also informs customers about the bene-

rown horn...



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fits of buying locally grown produce, such as avocados, green beans, zucchini and okra.

Safeway has concentrated on its organic produce program and has started segregating these products in Lifestyle stores' produce departments. The chain also buys produce from local growers.

Packaging also has been impacted by green initiatives. For example, all of Hannaford's organic overwrapped SKUs are constructed of corn-based recyclable material.

"Packaging has been something we've always looked at," Fresh & Easy's Wonnacott says. "Particularly on the produce side, it is



"Hannaford features sustainable initiatives in its company newsletter. We also use the Internet to educate and engage associates about our green initiatives, in addition to utilizing sustainability training modules for employees."

—Will Wedge, Hannaford Bros. Co.

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important to protect product. We date-code almost all of our produce, so we had to have packaging on it, but now we're introducing more loose produce into our departments."

Increased Visibility

Although many of these sustainable practices are evident to customers, chains also have been taking extra steps to provide more visibility to sustainable practices. "In addition to building LEED-certified stores, Supervalu has pursued a number of initiatives that demonstrate to customers our strong commitment to sustainability," McIntyre reports. "These include in-store recycling programs, the sale of four million reusable bags in 2009, our Groceries for Going Green transportation initiative and multiple waste composting efforts, among others."

In the Cony store, Hannaford subtly calls out all environmental highlights on small signs. The site's vestibule also includes an educational kiosk, which provides interactive displays that teach youngsters about sustainability. "For example, we'll include information on how a green roof works or what energy efficient lighting means," Wedge explains. "The kiosk modules are designed to be refreshed and changed over time."

Green information also is included in Hannaford's weekly flyer. "During our grand opening celebration in Augusta, we gave away 50,000 reusable bags to get a jump start on people bringing bags back to the store for grocery shopping," Wedge says. "As a result, we had a noticeable uptick of people using reusable bags in that market."

Fresh & Easy has in-store marketing that educates consumers on its sustainability practices. "For example, we have sliding lids on our reach-in freezers to conserve energy, and we educate consumers about this," Wonnacott says. "The big push right now is on reusable bags. New stores will offer bag giveaways and contests. We recently had a contest where customers competed to design a reusable bag. We had more than 1,300 designs submitted with 25,000 people voting on the winner."

To add visibility in its sustainability efforts,

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Publix offers in-store recycling of paper and plastic bags at all of its retail locations. Customers are encouraged to drop off any brand of plastic shopping bag for recycling, along with plastic sleeves from dry cleaning and newspapers. Since Publix introduced its 99-cent reusable bag in 2007, the chain has sold more than 10 million and has given many away. What's more, Publix runs communication campaigns to encourage the use of reusable bags, including running promotions with partners to distribute free bags. By doing this, the chain has reduced the use of paper and plastic grocery bags by more than one

million bags daily.

Stores also have taken a number of steps to educate and engage employees on green marketing efforts. Supervalu promotes the creation of a green culture throughout its corporate offices, retail stores and supply chain services through a variety of programs that get associates involved. "This includes our Environmental Steering Committee, which oversees activities aimed at minimizing our environmental footprint as well as the promotion of Green Teams at locations across the company to assist with business processes and activities to reduce each store or building's impact

FRESH & FAST

When it was instituted last year, the goal of Fresh & Easy's *Farm to Store in 24* program was to get the freshest produce possible to customers in the shortest amount of time. To accomplish this formidable task, the chain's produce team identified local growers with the same initiative. Today, all *Farm to Store in 24* products come from California farms and, depending on the season, as much as 65 percent of Fresh & Easy's produce is from California.

Last July, Fresh & Easy expanded its *Farm to Store in 24* program, bringing more produce from California farms to its stores in less than 24 hours. Last summer, the chain offered strawberries and grapes through this program. From summer to fall, the chain worked with local growers to bring additional fruit, such as peaches and nectarines, as well as vegetables, into the mix.

To let customers know when produce is available on its shelves within 24 hours from leaving the farm where it's grown, Fresh & Easy places a distinctive logo on its *Farm to Store in 24* products.

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on the planet," McIntyre says.

Nine years ago, Publix created the "Get Into a Green Routine", a program for environmental responsibility. Initially, the program educated employees about energy conservation. It now includes information on waste reduction, recycling and conservation of other resources including water.

"Hannaford features sustainable initiatives in its company newsletter," Wedge says. "We also use the Internet to educate and engage associates about our green initiatives, in addition to utilizing sustainability training modules for employees."

Although Safeway's produce managers and clerks follow the same operating procedures in LEED and non-LEED stores, there are ongoing sustainability measures implemented in all locations. "We've instituted a tremendous amount of energy- and water-saving elements and procedures," Gibbon says. "Ongoing improvements reflect our effort to make the produce department the most customer-friendly possible."

Measuring Success

Since many LEED-certified stores are new, success and achievements are difficult to measure. "Supervalu will make steady progress in reducing our carbon footprint



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Photo courtesy of Supervalu

The Glen Mills, PA, Acme, one of Supervalu's LEED stores, installed energy-efficient lighting in the produce department, which uses less power, creates less heat and prevents ultraviolet light damage to produce.

over the next five years; to reduce our landfill waste by 50 percent in five years; and to build a green culture with our associates through education, communication and engagement," McIntyre says.

Hannaford tracks energy use, carbon footprint and waste diversion across the chain. "Any energy conservation projects we fund have a payback and return-on-investment study done, so we know they're all yielding lower costs," reports Parmenter. "Our energy team keeps tabs on this."

Because other new Fresh & Easy sites are retrofits in existing locations, it isn't possible to always include the same sustainable elements. "Even though it can be difficult to uncover metrics, it's a matter of doing what is right, while still saving money," Wonnacott says.

Looking ahead, chains plan to continue identifying and implementing sustainability initiatives in the produce department and stores overall. Supervalu will continue working to refine and expand sustainability efforts through a variety of measures, including additional energy-efficient stores, employee and customer engagement and further investment. "Overall, as we look to the future for our produce, we are moving toward locally-relevant, energy-efficient and high-quality produce offerings, with more of a farmers' market look and feel," says McIntyre, who adds that the chain is currently working toward another LEED certified store.

Hannaford is working on taking the discoveries from the Cony store initiatives to understand what can be incorporated across the chain in new stores and remodels. "Some

of the things we have already incorporated in our prototype are low-flow water saving restroom fixtures, doors of refrigerated cases, high-efficiency lighting and advanced refrigeration systems," Parmenter reports.

Hannaford recently opened a store in Duanesburg, NY, that was designed and built to the LEED certification standard, although it has not yet been certified. "Many of our store designers are now LEED-trained and certified," adds Parmenter. "We have a process for designing stores — both new construction and remodels — that incorporates the LEED standard. We view it as an evolving process. We are very serious about building the most efficient supermarkets that we possibly can. Right now, we view LEED as the tool to do that. We will continue investigating aspects of energy efficiency and waste reduction, in addition to LEED standards."

Fresh & Easy brought in new refrigeration and cooling systems that will reduce the amount of water used. "We will be looking at many sustainable elements in the next several months," Wonnacott says. "Recently, we've been going through the process of our buildings becoming LEED-certified. As we move forward, we will continue to look at all aspects of our business to see where we can continue to innovate."

Publix plans to reduce its energy, fuel, water and material consumption by building more energy-efficient stores; reducing energy consumption in existing stores; minimizing water use; reducing fuel use and emissions; and evaluating the use and sale of alternative fuels.

Chains have discovered that the payback in operating a sustainable business is more than monetary.

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Customers to Hannaford's LEED-certified Cony, ME, store are greeted with an educational, interactive display detailing the store's sustainability efforts.



Fall Merchandising Tips And Tricks

Take advantage of holidays, new harvest and special events to push produce in new and creative ways.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

A horn-shaped wicker basket overflowing with fresh fruits and vegetables is an age-old symbol of a bountiful harvest.

Yet, there's more to maximizing autumn produce sales than simply advertising this cornucopia. Take advantage of trends like consumers eating and entertaining more at home, a return to basics and an abundance of holidays ripe for creative promotion to really heat up the produce department's fall ring.

Jim Weber, produce supervisor at Econo Foods, a 6-store chain based in Brillion, WI, says, "Fall is one of the best selling times of the year. Customers are back in the kitchen cooking again; there are football games with tailgating parties just about every weekend, and holidays like Thanksgiving, which is probably the biggest food holiday of the year."

September 1 to 30: Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month

Fruits and vegetables will take center stage in September for the Hockessin, DE-based Produce for Better Health Foundation's (PBH) celebration of Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month. This year, PBH will launch a new, multi-month pledge campaign that was a result of numerous discussions between the National Fruit & Vegetable Alliance and representatives from First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* childhood obesity initiative.

Consumers are looking for opportunities to make healthy choices, says Elizabeth Pivonka, Ph.D., R.D., PBH's president and CEO. "I encourage everyone to check out and download the pledge campaign toolkit and incorporate some or all of the materials into their own September Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month promotions, and into their 2011 plans as well."

The America's More Matters Pledge: Fruits & Veggies . . . Today and Every Day! toolkit materials can help retailers, growers, shippers, processors and health educators promote this message by providing items such as pledge cards, press release templates, newsletter articles, POS materials, web link buttons and radio scripts. These materials are customizable and free of charge for the industry, educators and members of the public health community.

In addition, PBH will add a new activity exchange page to the My Community section of its Web site. Here, retailers and other

industry members can upload dates, times and even photos of contests, free materials, in-store demonstrations, classes, tours and other produce-related activities. In turn, consumers can type in their zip code and see what produce-related activities are happening in both their community and across the country. PBH is also aggressively expanding its social media marketing efforts for the campaign.

September 1-30: Organic Harvest Month

Fall is a great time for Organic Harvest Month, says Tonya Antle, vice president of organic sales at Earthbound Farm, in San Juan Bautista, CA. "This is because it offers an opportunity to expose consumers to new items that they can experiment with in holiday meals."

Simcha Weinstein, director of marketing for Albert's Organics Inc., headquartered in Bridgeport, NJ, remarks, "In September, we see strong supplies of tomatoes, grapes, nectarines, pluots, plums, peaches, nectarines and early season pears." Display organic produce in large, powerful, dynamic displays for this month-long promotion, he adds. "We offer a nice size poster for Organic Harvest Month promotions. Retail customers can go to our Web site, down-



Kroger partnered with Ocean Spray last year to set up mock cranberry bogs. This year, Ocean Spray offered coupons for fresh products with the purchase of bottled products.

Photo courtesy of Kroger Co.

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Schnucks & Weis Markets Celebrate Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month

This will be the 9th year that Schnucks, a St. Louis, MO-base chain, will celebrate September as Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month in a promotion that features superstar athlete, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, as its spokesperson. As part of the promotion, Mike O'Brien, vice president of produce, says, "Each week, we feature a different fruit or vegetable with Jackie and the More Matters logo. We also have health and nutrition tips as part of the ad and brochures available for kids packed full of fun games and information about health, exercise and the nutritional value of eating more fruits and vegetables."

This year, Schnucks will be incorporating the Produce for Better Health Foundation's (PBH) new America's More Matters Pledge: Fruits & Veggies . . . Today and Every Day! into its brochures and ads. Speaking out for PBH and the industry, O'Brien adds, "This is our window of opportunity. We have been touting the nutritional value of produce for years. We now have an ally in the First Lady. We should all be using this as a theme for our produce ads for the month of September. It's not only an opportunity to push the health angle because we know eating more fruits and vegetables is good for Americans, but we can sell more produce, which, from a business standpoint, is an added benefit."

Weis Markets, a Sunbury, PA-based chain, is also celebrating Fruits & Veggies — More Matters Month with the launch of its new 90-minute

Weis Mystery Tours geared toward third and fourth graders. Karen Buch, RD, LDN, director of lifestyle initiatives, says, "The new tour is based on the Food Guide Pyramid and encompasses the entire store. However, the produce department plays a huge role."

The interactive tours are based on solving a mystery. Students are outfitted with props such as magnifying glasses, detective hats and clues at the start of the tour. Then, they engage in a series of challenging activities. In the produce department, for example, students search for fruits or vegetables of a certain color. Buch says, "An evaluation of a pilot of this tour that we conducted in 2008 showed that significant learning took place among the students. This school year, we anticipate hosting 25,000 students at 50 of our stores in all five states where we are located."



Photo courtesy of Weis Markets

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load the PDF file and take it to a local print shop."

Antle notes, "I am a big believer in inspiring shoppers to buy due to the taste of

the produce. Therefore, provide a few recipes with easy-to-read shopping lists. If you're not demo-ing the recipe, at least show a full color photo of the dish. In addition,

our recipe brochure, which also comes with coupons, is a great item to feature."

"One out-of-the-box retail promotion," suggests Weinstein, "is to offer a 15 percent discount to any consumer who brings in a first-time organic shopper who buys \$50-plus worth of organic groceries. The new shopper will also receive a 15 percent discount that day at the register. This way, you build sales and new customers."

September 9: Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year. Robert Schueller, director of public relations for Melissa's/World Variety Produce Inc., located in Los Angeles, CA, says, "There are many special foods, so be prepared: dried fruits, honey, apples, figs, celery root, squash, onions, leeks, carrots, quince, fresh herbs and more are all important items for this celebration."

"Also on theme for this religious holiday are new fruits of the season, either fruits that are just beginning harvest, such as apples, or fruits someone has never tried before, such as pomegranates," points out Jackie Caplan Wiggins, vice president and business development manager for Frieda's Inc., in Los Alamitos, CA.

September 16: Mexican Independence Day

September 16th is Independence Day in

Mexico. Schueller suggests, "Create colorful displays with fresh chiles, squash, corn husks, cilantro, jicama, yucca and plantains. Use your Cinco de Mayo decorations and go crazy with color and variety in the produce department. Chile strings and wreaths, piñatas and streamers will add to this festive promotion."

Fittingly, September 16th is also National Guacamole Day. Chris Henry, director of sales and marketing for Escondido, CA-based Giumarra Agricom International LLC, recommends, "Offer attractive pricing, cross-promotions and recipe ideas for avocados at this time. We can offer retailers POS materials and assistance with merchandising."

Mid-October: MLB World Series Playoffs

World Series parties are certain to have plenty of fast and easy snack foods, says Schueller. "That means an opportunity to merchandise and cross-merchandise items such as guacamole and salsa kits, avocados, tomatoes, jalapenos, hummus, edamame and key limes for beer."

This season, the Fallston, MD-based Mexican Hass Avocado Importers Association (MHAIA) will partner with the Hass Avocado Board (HAB) for the second year in the 2010 The Big Hit Promotion. The retail component of the promotion calls for themed, 5-ft. display towers that will also provide avocado tips and recipes. Additionally, produce departments will find a camera packed inside of their displays. A photo of an implemented display serves as the department's entry to win a trip to the World Series, or one of 400 other Major League Baseball prizes.

Other components of the promotion include a 30-second spot featuring avocados in partnership with Turner Broadcasting's MLB postseason coverage; an Avocado League recipe promotion where consumers can vote for their favorite recipe online; a partnership with registered dietitians, including *The Biggest Loser* dietitian, Cheryl Forberg, during the fall to highlight nutritional benefits of avocados in local and national media interviews; and the introduction of an iPhone application that will be promoted via Facebook and Twitter.

October 31: Halloween

Melissa's Schueller asserts, "Halloween doesn't have to be all about candy. Place power-panels filled with dried fruits near the candy display for a healthful, alternative option and increased sales. In addition," he adds, "Halloween is the No. 1 decorating holiday of the year. Create a display with pumpkins, Indian corn and ornamental gourds."



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Hy-Vee & G.F.F. Foods Build Winning National Apple Month Display

Apples are synonymous with fall. They are also huge profit-makers. This is even truer for retailers who participate in the Vienna, VA-based U.S. Apple Association's National Apple Month (NAM) promotion. Last year, a display themed the Ultimate Apple Lovers Dream (pictured), which included more than 15 varieties of conventional and organic apples and apple tie-in products, such as caramel apple dip and peanut butter, earned a Windsor Heights, IA-location of Hy-Vee the top prize in the 10-or-more registers category. Brett Reed, the produce manager who built the winning display at one location of the West Des Moines, IA-based chain, says, "We ran the display during the first two weeks of October and sold nearly 200 cases of apples during that time."

G.F.F. Foods, a single store in Moore, OK, won first place in the division of stores with nine-and-fewer registers. Produce manager, David Dozier, employed a Great American theme, displaying more than 15 varieties of apples grown throughout the nation. More than 400 boxes were sold during the promotion. Dozier incorporated tray-pack apples, 3- and 5-lb. bagged apples and totes



Photo courtesy of Hy-Vee

of apples in the display with shipper displays of tie-in products.

Kay Swartz Rentzel, NAM director, reports, "More than 900 stores participated in the 2009 display contest. Participating retailers saw, on average, a 15.3 percent increase in apple sales. Our goal is to move 50 percent of the crop by mid-December, and this past year, we were right at 47 to 48 percent."

The 2010 NAM display contest will run from September 1 to November 30. Tie-in products for this year include Marzetti Caramel Apple Dip and Apple Crisp, Smucker's Natural Peanut Butter and Jiff Peanut Butter.

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John Carl, sales manager for Dan Schantz Farm & Greenhouse LLC, in Zionsville, PA, reports, "We start to ship the two big items — pumpkins and mums — the first week of September to the Northeast and by the third or fourth week of the month to the Southeast."

"Sales of painted pumpkins are strong," adds Carl. "We don't see a lot of business with the carve-your-own type, but painted pumpkins are big, especially the large 12- to 18-pounders and smaller 3- to 4-pounders," he notes. "Happy-faced monsters get the shelf space. Scary doesn't sell."

Many retailers will hold in-store Guess-the-Weight contests with pumpkins anywhere from 100 to 400 pounds, and some as big as 600 pounds. "However," Carl reminds, "it's important to remember that pumpkins are perishable. You can't put them outside on the hot concrete in front of the store. They need air circulation. They need to be on a pallet off the ground."

For decorating, Carl remarks that interest in Heirloom varieties of pumpkins, such as Cinderella, Fairytale and Cotton Candy, has increased, while appeal for Indian corn

and gourds has reached a plateau. The most popular mums are those in stand-alone pots that can be placed on the porch. "The key to creating a 'wow' factor," he says, "is to put everything together rather than the pumpkin up front, the painted pumpkins in floral and the Indian corn standing up in the back of the department."

Fall Harvest

New season apples, pears and grapes are ideal for fall promotion. Lee Ann Oxford, marketing director for L&M Co. Inc., in Raleigh, NC, advises, "Think 'new crop' and offer a value proposition. For example, use bin promotions, big displays of apples, onions and potatoes and basic ads on items like 5-lb. bags of potatoes or hard squash."

"Heirloom varieties of apples that date back to Thomas Jefferson's days are making a comeback," says Frieda's Wiggins. Examples of these varieties are Pink Pearl, Cox's Orange Pippin, Ribston Pippin, King David, Spitzenburg, Golden Russet, Winesap and Northern Spy.

Peter Gregg, spokesman for the New

York Apple Association (NYAA), in Fishers, NY, acknowledges, "Sampling promotions are effective ways to get customers to buy apples in general, and other varieties they wouldn't usually try." Last season, the

Early Fall Means Hatch Chile Roasting At Bristol Farms



Hatch chiles, an extremely flavorful variety grown in Hatch, NM, with a short 4- to 6-week harvest, is featured in an annual fall promotion at Bristol Farms, a 13-store chain based in Carson, CA. Raul Gallegos, director of produce and floral, says, "I remember in my teenage years, relatives would always look forward to when the Hatch chiles were available. Two years ago, I thought a promotion that featured these chiles might be an opportunity for us. Today, we have a pretty good following of customers, not just those from New Mexico and the Southwest, but foodies as well, who enjoy the convenience of being able to buy Hatch chiles in our stores."

This year's third annual Hatch Chile promotion at Bristol Farms will take place from mid-August through the second week in September. The chain's supply partner is Melissa's/World Variety Produce Inc., in Los Angeles, CA. The promotion is announced to customers on the chain's Web site and via in-store POS materials. All stores stock the fresh chiles. Those locations that don't roast the chiles on site will feature them on end-cap or large satellite displays in the produce department. Meanwhile, those stores roasting chiles on-site will build destination front-of-store displays with information such as how to freeze the roasted chilies for use throughout the year, recipes and other usage tips. There will also be demos and samplings. These roasting stores will also offer cross-merchandised Hatch chile products in other departments throughout the store.

pb

NYAA conducted more than 1,200 day-long, in-store demos. Results showed that during the demo program there was a 72 percent increase in sales. Four weeks following the event, there still was a 47 percent increase compared to sales prior to the event.

"Apple- and Pear-of-the-Month promotions are good ways to increase sales," asserts Roger Pepperl, marketing director of Stemilt Growers LLC, headquartered in Wenatchee, WA.

Dennis James, director of marketing for the Pear Bureau Northwest (PBN), in Milwaukie, OR, says, "Pears are a high impulse

item. Don't dilute the offering by displaying pears with other items like apples. Keep all pears together, and then arrange them by color and variety."

Similar to pears, 70 percent of grapes are purchased on impulse, reports John Pandol, vice president of special projects for Delano, CA-based Pandol Bros. Inc., which has just launched a cube-shaped package that makes washing grapes easier. "Make sure fall displays are at least 30 square feet and stocked with all colors of grapes."

There's a real opportunity to promote black grapes around Halloween, adds Gor-

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Reader Service # 64

PROGRESSIVEPRODUCE

don Robertson, vice president of sales and marketing for Sun World International LLC, in Bakersfield, CA. "When customers taste black grapes and learn they are seedless, there is a greater opportunity for incremental sales," he explains.

November 25: Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is one of the largest food holidays of the year. "Promote ingredients for traditional dishes," advises Melissa's Schueller, "such as squash, potatoes, shallots, garlic, fresh herbs, hazelnuts, pine nuts, French beans, baby carrots, sweet potatoes and cranberries."

Thanksgiving is also the biggest selling holiday of the year for sweet potatoes, points out George Wooten, owner and president of Wayne E. Bailey Produce Co., headquartered in Chadbourne, NC. "The Saturday and Sunday prior to Thanksgiving is like Christmas Eve for us," he says. "We ship out a lot of sweet potatoes. But, there are good opportunities to promote sweet potatoes all year long."

Sue Johnson-Langdon, executive director of the Smithfield-based North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission, says, "Cross-merchandise sweet potatoes with fresh herbs and cheese sauce or over in the meat department with onions."

Cranberries are one of the final few seasonal fruits in the produce department and a fall favorite. Bob Wilson, principal partner and managing member of The Cranberry Network LLC, headquartered in Wisconsin Rapids, WI, says, "The season is shaping up as exceptional for cranberry quality. Key demand, or about 55 percent of the crop, is sold between the last weeks of October through Thanksgiving."

The most popular fresh cranberry product is the 12-oz. bag, reports Keith Benoit, senior director and general manager of special markets for Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc., in Lakeville/Middleboro, MA. "Display fresh cranberries where they have the greatest visibility," he says. "That means at the front of the department or the end of an aisle. It's all about presentation and color."

Last year, The Kroger Co., a Cincinnati, OH-based chain, partnered with Ocean Spray to set up table-top cranberry bogs outside of key high traffic stores. This season, the company is offering retailers a cross-merchandising promotion where customers who purchase two bottles of branded cranberry juice receive a \$1-off coupon for fresh cranberries. "Very creative retailers always like to try something new and different," says Benoit.

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Make Way For Michigan Apples

Michigan apple growers are optimistic about good supplies of quality fruit, despite a spring freeze.

BY BARBARA ROBISON

Michigan apple growers anticipate a good quality crop, and although volume is down, they will still have an estimated 15 million bushels of apples to sell this season.

"Unfortunately, some apple growing areas have had higher losses than others because the damage to the crop was spotty," reports Denise Donohue, executive director of the Lansing-based Michigan Apple Committee (MAC). "We lost about 25 percent of the crop due to low temperatures in May. However, the primary apple-producing areas seem to have escaped some of the bad weather. We had lots of rain and we depend on the natural rainfall for moisture to size the fruit. The hot temperatures we've received more recently create the sugars necessary for the flavorful sweetness of our apples."

"This past year, we had record production, and this year, we believe we'll have a good 80 percent or better of a normal year across most varieties except Red Delicious," says Tom Pletcher, vice president of sales and marketing at BelleHarvest Sales Inc., based in Belding, MI. "That variety appears to be no more than 60 percent of a normal crop."

Greg Orchards & Produce Inc., headquartered in Benton Harbor, MI, packs and ships apples for about 20 growers. "We are located in the southwestern part of the state and were harder hit with the freeze," admits part owner and general manager Barry Winkel. "We expect to market about 30 to 40 percent of a normal crop from this area."

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cial varieties and is the largest producer of Jonathans in the country. In order of fresh production for the state are: Red Delicious, Gala, Golden Delicious, Jonathan and McIntosh. "We're seeing more Jonagold, Fujis and Galas being produced," says Tom Curtis, managing member of Michigan Fresh Marketing LLC, in Belding, MI. "The Jonamac and Gingergold are two of the earlier varieties available."

MAC's Web site carries information on caring for apples at home. It also provides a usage chart, listing many of the leading varieties with their taste and texture, and major usages for each. A colorful poster, showing 16 varieties, with a brief description and available date listed below each, appears on the Web site.

"We pack to order for specific customers and find variety appeal for our apples is very regional, especially for Jonathans and McIntosh," states John Schaefer, Jr., president of Jack Brown Produce Inc., in Sparta, MI. "Among the newer varieties, the Honeycrisp is the one the public seems to prefer. Some advantages our apples provide are a fresher taste, better transportation costs and a lower carbon footprint. We are located fairly close to many markets with large populations and on-time delivery is expedient. Plus, our customers want to support local businesses and farmers. We pack an order in the morning, and ship it in the afternoon or early evening for arrival the next day."

The increasingly popular Honeycrisp apple combines unusual color and excellent

sweet flavor with a special bite. It is good for fresh eating, fresh-cut slices, or to cut for salads. Michigan's cooler climate produces a fine Jonathan, also a popular apple. It is a pretty variety, with juicy flavor and spicy tang, which blends well with other apples. It is used for both eating and cooking. The McIntosh is a versatile, classic, round apple, with white flesh, a slightly tart flavor and a nice aroma. It is good eaten out-of-hand, added to salads, used for applesauce and cider, or the ever-popular apple pie.

Westborn Market, a 3-store chain headquartered in Livonia, MI, promotes all Michigan apples, according to operations manager, Danny Sawalha. "We have huge apple displays in the fall, using banners, demonstrations and other sales tools. We like to promote the locally grown fruit and have a Taste Local program, which is promoted on our Web site," he says. "Honeycrisp is really popular, but our customers also especially like the McIntosh and Empire varieties."

Honeycrisp production has grown four or five times over the previous year's production, according to BelleHarvest's Pletcher. "The Piñata is a newer eating apple with just small quantities available because it is so new," adds Winkel of Greg Orchards & Produce.

CONTAINERS ARE GREAT MARKETING TOOLS

Michigan Fresh Marketing plans to use RPCs (reusable plastic containers) and dis-

play-ready cartons for its apples this season. "We like to two-layer Euro cartons for our Honeycrisp and Jonathan varieties," says the company's Curtis. "We also will use the locally grown logo bags, tri-wall bins and bushels."

The half-height Euro carton works well for in-store displays and is easy to move around the produce department. Belle Harvest Sales will be using an increased amount of plastic containers, both in bins from the orchards and RPCs. Renewed emphasis will be placed on tote bags in the fall and wooden orchard bins for retail displays, according to the firm's Pletcher.

LOCALLY GROWN REMAINS POPULAR

MAC's primary focus is on promoting the state's crop as locally grown. "We plan to have active promotions in the Chicago area this winter, and will have demos and other programs in the Detroit region," says Donohue. "We will feature some apple growers, depending on market requests."

The Committee plans to provide outdoor and radio advertising and will feature locally grown on tote bags and bag closures. Four versions of POP cards are available, as well as other in-store support and sampling, plus locally grown giveaways.

Martin's Super Market, a 20-store chain, in South Bend, IN, has apples custom-packed and runs big locally grown promotions. "Michigan's Honeycrisp is considered locally grown for us," notes director of pro-



"We have huge apple displays in the fall, using banners, demonstrations and other sales tools. We like to promote the locally grown fruit and have a Taste Local program, which is promoted on our Web site."

**— Danny Sawalha
Westborn Market**



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duce Ed Osowski. "We have an annual apple sale, featuring 10 varieties in a Healthy Harvest promotion. Early in the season, 5-lb. bags are excellent sellers, which we tie in with correlated items, such as caramel apples, for any additional sales. We also have success with 3-lb. premium-pack apple promotions."

RETAIL PROMOTIONS THROUGHOUT THE SEASON

Two special variety promotions will be offered, one for Michigan Honeycrisp and another for Michigan Jonagold. The Honeycrisp promotion runs from September through November, and the Jonagold will run from October through January. The Honeycrisp support involves POP cards, recipe cards, a Euro carton, a master tray carton and a shipper stand. The Jonagold materials include a POP poster, a Euro carton and a master tray carton. An Early Season Rebate program is also being held in which retail ads on early Michigan apple varieties must be run between August 15 and October 15, with ad submissions, due by November 15th. A Holiday Baking Rebate program runs between October 31 and December 24, and a Tray Pack Rebate is in effect between November 1, 2010 and



Photo courtesy of Michigan Apple Committee

March 1, 2011.

A Back to School program is also part of MAC's promotional mix for this season. Michigan Apple School Sweepstakes will award cash prizes for collecting Michigan apple logos from Michigan apple bags and entering them in a random drawing. Collection of the logos continues all season, with

school winners announced in the spring of 2011. Information on all the promotions is available from the MAC.

BelleHarvest stresses partnering with retail accounts and has numerous resources to apply, including tying in with all the MAC initiatives. "We have recently been hosting local produce manager groups on orchard and packing line tours to familiarize them with all the issues that affect our products before they reach consumers," says Pletcher.

INDUSTRY PROMOTES APPLE NUTRITION

MAC will emphasize the nutrition story of apples through a social media program, kicking off in January. Healthy recipes will be presented, as well as links to other Web sites.

Apples are naturally fat-, saturated fat- and cholesterol-free and are an excellent source of fiber, both soluble (including pectin) and insoluble types. Fiber lowers cholesterol levels in the blood, helping prevent clogged arteries, which might cause a heart attack or stroke. One medium apple has 81 calories and 159 milligrams of potassium. Eating apples with the skin on increases the amount of vitamin C and insoluble fiber provided.

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Reader Service # 111

Reader Service # 57

New York Apples: A Local, Seasonal Favorite For Consumers And Retailers

With plenty of varieties to please consumers and a built-in local following, New York apples are poised to take the produce department by storm.

BY BOB JOHNSON

From the Hudson Valley to the Champlain region near the Canadian border, and in Western New York near the temperate shores of Lake Ontario, New York apple growers are passionate about their harvest.

"We grow a very high quality apple in New York," asserts Kaari Stannard, president of New York Apple Sales Inc., headquartered in Castleton, NY, which ships for nine different packinghouses in the state. "New York is the second largest producer in the country," she adds.

Each of the state's three grand apple-growing regions has a special climate that dictates a characteristic harvest calendar and creates unique conditions that are perfect for special local varieties.

"What we do most of is the Empire variety," reports Tim Mansfield, director of sales and marketing at Sun Orchard Fruit Co., based in Burt, NY. "Niagara County is probably the best place in the world to grow Empire. Our focus is on quality; it's an intense passion and the quality has to be right before it goes out the door."

The Hudson Valley is the earliest of the three apple growing regions in the state. The Champlain region near the Canadian border and the Western New York region near Lake Ontario are usually 10 days to two weeks later, according to Russ Bartolotta, president of Klein's Kill Fruit Farm Co., in Germantown, NY.

Because of this year's unusually warm weather in the late spring and early summer, growers in all



Photo courtesy of New York Apple Association

New York's Niagara County is believed to be one of the best places to grow Empires, one of the top local favorites.

three regions expect their fruit to be ready for harvest a week or two earlier than usual. And because the weather has been dry, the fruit figures to be clean and sweet, albeit possibly a little small. "We need rain. The whole area is very dry; it's a question of fruit size. We need it to rain at least once a week," says Jody Pavero, sales manager at Pavero Cold Storage Corp., headquartered in Highland, NY. "With the dry weather we'll have a sweet tasting crop of apples this year. We've got a nice clean crop and we've been irrigating it."

There are reports of an early harvest from all of the apple growing regions in the state. "We're probably running about 10 days ahead of usual," reports Mansfield. "We will begin to harvest Jonamac, then comes Paula Red and then Ginger Gold. At this point, the crop looks like it's very good quality. Overall, the New York crop will be about 80 percent of last year's because some areas got hit by frost."

"It takes 436 more gallons of fuel to deliver a load of apples to Boston from the West Coast versus from upstate New York. In today's green environment, this should be a huge marketing advantage."

**— Jim Allen
New York Apple
Association Inc.**

The harvest of 2011 will be early, fruitful — though not quite as large as the harvest of 2010 — and the apples should be of high quality. "The crop looks very good," says Lee Peters, vice president of sales and marketing at Wolcott, NY-based Fowler Brothers Inc., who surveyed the orchards two weeks into July. "The fruit has nice size coming along, and it's a clean crop. This year's harvest will be in full swing by September and will be done around the first week of November," he says.



Photo courtesy of New York Apple Association

BUY LOCAL

New York apples are a popular choice for many consumers in the Northeast because they want to support local farmers and minimize the amount of fuel needed to ship the food from the farm to the market. "Our biggest selling point east of the Mississippi is that we are regionally correct. Here in the East, local is a big thing," Peters said.

Buying local is a way to preserve local farmers and the local agricultural way of life. "I would say 70 to 80 percent of our apples are sold in the Northeast. Everybody's buying local; people want to keep their money local," Pavero says.

The desire to buy local does not need a great deal of promotional effort on the retail level. Even the relatively fine print of letting consumers know where their produce was grown is usually enough to give New York apples an edge among Northeastern consumers. "All the supermarkets have to say is where the produce is from and it gives us a little advantage," Pavero adds. "I believe eight out of 10 consumers want to buy something local and take the time to look for it."

There is also an environmental and economic incentive for consumers to buy produce from nearby farms. "You're not supporting Big Oil by shipping apples all over the country," says Sandy Cohen, president of Aspers, PA-based Cohen Produce Marketing. "People absolutely want to support their local farmers. The biggest selling points for Eastern apples are the flavor and the proximity to the Northeast."

The largest trade organization can even put a number on the fossil fuel saved when a New England shopper buys apples grown by their neighbors in New York. "It takes 436 more gallons of fuel to deliver a load of apples to Boston from the West Coast versus from upstate New York," reports Jim Allen,

president of New York Apple Association Inc. (NYAA), in Fishers, NY. "In today's green environment, this should be a huge marketing advantage. Apples are a commodity that retailers can make a dedicated effort to support sustainable farming and to lower the carbon footprint of their purchases, versus purchasing such international produce as pineapple and bananas. When given the choice, customers will continue to pressure retailers to supply them with products that are regionally correct, have a lowered carbon footprint and will support sustainable agriculture in the region where they live."

Proximity to Northeast consumers gives New York apples an edge in shipping costs, which translates into a significant edge in retail price. "There is definitely a shipping freight advantage, which we reflect in lower retail prices than on the Washington apples, for example, as a general statement," says Art DiCesare, category merchant for Wegmans Food Markets Inc., based in Rochester, NY.

While noting that New York apples are local is helpful, it is not always a necessity, since the customers probably already know. "We don't specifically market 'New York' or 'local' in the apple category but customers know what New York varieties they like and ask for them by name throughout the fall," DiCesare says. "Empire is our best-seller, with Galas, McIntosh and Honey Crisp also being very popular."

A VARIETY FOR EVERYONE

A number of varieties widely grown in New York orchards have developed loyal followings over the decades, and even centuries. "All New York varieties are very popular with customers, but some of our regional flavors such as McIntosh, Empire, Cortland and Macoun stand out," says Allen. "Of course, the increasingly popular Honeycrisp, Galas and Jonagold continue to rise in

Back by popular demand

There's a good reason why the new school year coincides with a spike in New York State apple sales - thousands of school-age children looking to get on the good side of their teachers - searching for that little edge that can help turn C's into B's, and B's into A's when those first report cards come home.

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demand, too."

The large number of varieties and the sweetness of the apples from New York orchards have become a trademark over the years. "People like the wide range of varieties, the quality and the flavor," explains John Russell, general manager at Lake Ontario Fruit Inc., in Albion, NY. "Our cool nights are great for growing apples. The lake moderates the temperatures." Lake Ontario features Honey Crisp, Gala, Empire and Jonagold among other varieties.

Many growers produce close to two-dozen varieties, which allows them to extend their harvest season and give their customers a wider range of choices. Bartolotta of Klein's Kill Fruit Farm, for example, grows 19 different varieties. His harvest began around the beginning of August with his Paula Reds, followed by the Galas in the middle of the month and the McIntoshs around August 24. The Rome variety will end his harvest around mid-October. "Variety and flavor are the main selling points; we have so many varieties and flavors of apples," he notes. "This year, the fruit will have even higher Brix than normal because of the heat."

Although there are New York standards like Empire and McIntosh, there are also some newer varieties worth keeping an eye on. "In time, Zestar is going to be very prominent. It's easy to grow, it's early and it has a pleasing flavor with good crunch," says Peters of Fowler Brothers, which grows 23 different varieties of apples in Western New York near Lake Ontario. Empire, McIntosh, Cortland and Gala are their most prominent varieties, but Zestar is just one of the three varieties Peters believes is about to become very prominent.

Honey Crisp, another variety growing in popularity, comes in around the second week in September, or a little less than a month after Zestar. The third apple to watch is, interestingly enough, a cross between the first two. "SweeTango is a cross between Zestar and Honey Crisp that is taking the world by storm," Peters says.

BROADER MARKETS

New York apples have a shipping edge and a base of loyal consumers in an area that extends far beyond the Northeast. "We ship locally but we are also supported as a regional shipper. We also ship to Florida and Texas, anywhere within two days," says New York Apple Sales' Stannard, whose firm handles sales for numerous New York growers.

It's a common pattern among New York apple growers, who generally extend beyond a strong core market in the Northeast, to also ship to stores anywhere east of

**"We don't specifically
market New York or
local in the apple
category but
customers know
what New York
varieties they
like and ask for
them by name
throughout the Fall."**

**— Art DiCesare
Wegmans Food
Markets Inc.**

the Mississippi and even beyond. "We ship across the country," says Lake Ontario's Russell. "A majority goes to the East Coast, but we also ship into Texas."

Some growers ship all the way to the Rockies, and a few even go all the way to the West Coast. "I ship all over the country," says Bartolotta of Klein's Kill Fruit Farm, "from New York to California."

New York apple growers are even finding markets for their harvest on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. Sixty to 70 percent of Sun Orchard's apples are sold in the Northeast, but the firm also does a fair amount of export business to the United Kingdom.

Fowler Brothers sells 40 to 45 percent of its apples in the Northeast, but the company is finding markets far beyond the region. "You can find our apples anywhere east of the Rockies," remarks Peters. "We export, too. Last year, we shipped apples to India and Indonesia."

No matter where they are sold, apples are a convenient, economical and tasty way to do the right thing. "Eating apples is a smart and healthy choice for consumers," says Allen of the NYAA. "They are portable, tasty and offer nutritional benefits to consumers. Childhood obesity and diabetes is at dangerously high levels. The USDA is encouraging increased consumption of fruits and vegetable to combat these trends and is pushing for more apples in schools across the country. Even QSRs such as McDonalds, Arby's and Subway now offer apples as alternatives to fatty side dishes. Consumers can also fight diseases by incorporating apples in lunches and meals routinely."

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Reader Service # 10



México

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Don't miss your chance to benefit your business! More than 110 quality suppliers from Mexico will be on hand at the Mexico Pavilion (booth #1759) at PMA's Fresh Summit Exposition in Orlando, FL. Showcasing more than 120 outstanding products from Mexico including guavas, cactus leaves, plantains, mangos, coconuts, tomatoes, cucumbers, grapes, eggplant, and berries, as well as many more, the Pavilion provides a convenient way for you to tour Mexico's best offering.

Additionally, representatives from Mexico's leading programs will be on hand to help buyers better understand the support given to the Mexican export sector by industry and government. Talk with them in the Pavilion and find out how their support can benefit your business.

Increase your business' profitability and success with products from Mexico – make sure Booth 1759 is on your "must see" list for the PMA expo. To increase your chance of success with Mexican products, take these tips into consideration:

Align with Top Suppliers

A product is only as good as how it is produced and Mexico's growers take great pride in their products and in exporting the highest quality produce to their customers. Mexico's strict quality and food safety standards demonstrate the grower commitment to providing only the best for the marketplace.



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This is a quality seal program that has benchmarked with Global Gap and SQF certifications. Product carrying this seal has fulfilled specific quality requirements and been certified by a third-party. Currently 72 requirements are in place for this program.

Promote Flavor and Freshness

The variety of products and their wide availability from Mexico means you can always promote the freshest quality product to your customers. Retailers can boost sales of many products from Mexico by focusing promotions on the flavor of the products. Sampling fruits like mangos and papayas and vegetables like asparagus will tantalize consumers' taste buds and increase impulse sales.

Use Mexico's Trade Programs

The Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico offers various opportunities to build business with Mexican fruit and vegetables. Be sure to check out these available programs. Their DIRECT BUYING PROGRAM & TRADE MISSIONS help retailers enhance the value chain of produce from Mexico by organizing business agendas and trade missions. More than 20 of the largest U.S. retail firms have visited Mexico under this program.

The MEXICAN FRESH PRODUCE EXPORTERS DIRECTORY promotes the exportable supply of the Mexican produce sector. It includes a master catalogue with information on growers, firms, production, availability, volume, seasons and varieties, among other information. It also offers integrated public and private databases and regular updates of registered growers and is available in an annual printed edition, a CD-ROM, and via website.

For more information on trade and business opportunities with Mexico:
Agricultural Office at the Embassy of Mexico

HECTOR CORTES

Agricultural Attache

(202)728-1727

Hcortes.sagarpaua@verizon.net

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Reader Service # 22



Fall Is The Ripe Time To Promote Avocados From Chile

With ample volumes to promote, take advantage of two-size programs, cross-merchandising tactics and displays geared toward Game Day.

BY CAROL M. BAREUTHER, RD

Super Bowl and Cinco de Mayo compete as the two top avocado-selling holidays each year.

With consistent supplies of fresh avocados from Chile flooding the marketplace in the fall, could Halloween, Thanksgiving or even the World Series be the next big holiday for moving record-breaking amounts of this fruit? This is the merchandising opportunity.

Jim Weber, produce director at Econo Foods, a 6-store chain based in Brillion, WI, says, "The fall is one of the best seasons to promote avocados for us because of all the football and tailgating. Customers don't really care where the fruit is coming from, but the Hass avocados from Chile are usually of good quality with a nice nutty-tasting flavor. We promote them every other week through the end of the year and every time they are on promotion we can sell up to 50 cases per store, per week."

SEASONAL OUTLOOK

Avocados are available in U.S. supermarkets year-round with supplies coming from three main sources: California, from January to October; Mex-

ico, peaking from December through June; and Chile, traditionally starting in August and running through February.

Scot Olson, director of produce and floral for Grocery Outlet Inc., a Berkeley, CA-based chain of 130-plus stores, says, "Our options as a retailer for good quality avocados in promotable volumes during the fall are so much better now. The Chilean crop usually overlaps with Mexico as California is finishing up so supplies are ample. This means customers can keep making their favorite dishes year-round, and in turn, it has helped to grow consumption."

The crop estimate for the 2010-2011 season for Chilean avocados is 200 million pounds, reports Maggie Bezart, the Aptos, CA-based marketing director for the Chilean Avocado Importers Association (CAIA). "Like all growing regions, this is an off-bearing year for Chile. The earthquake earlier this year had no effect on the avocados for this season. It was 200 miles south of Santiago and Chilean avocados are grown north of Santiago."

Although this season's crop is projected to be some 30 percent smaller than last year's record 300 million-pound-plus crop, Giovanni Cavaletto, vice president of operations for Bloomington, CA-based Index Fresh Inc., guarantees, "There will still be ample promotional volumes."

This is especially true this year for the U.S. market, adds Rob Wedin, vice president of fresh sales for Calavo Growers Inc., in Santa Paula, CA. "There's been a good opportunity for Chilean fruit in Europe in the past. However, this opportunity has slipped away as the Euro has declined."

A smaller-sized crop, however, does mean good fruit sizing. Jim Donovan, vice president of international operations for Mission Produce Inc., in Oxnard, CA, estimates, "About 30 to 35 percent of the fruit should be in the larger 48 count (ct) range, with 20 percent between 32, 36 and 40 ct, and 25 percent smaller fruit around 60 ct."

"This means there will be both big and medium-



Stickering ripe fruit and placing them in designated baskets help consumers identify them and also prevents overhandling and bruising.

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sized fruit out of Chile for two-size programs," explains Chris Henry, director of sales and marketing for Giumarra Agricom International LLC, located in Escondido, CA.

California's abundant avocado crop this year has meant that shippers have pushed back the start date for importing Chilean fruit in order to assure a good market. Bezart reveals, "We are projected to start with good volume by mid-September."

Avocados gain size as well as oil content the longer they hang on the tree. A greater oil content means more flavorful fruit. Henry says, "The oil levels in the northern growing regions are exceeding 24 percent dry matter."

The Chilean avocado industry has set mandatory minimum standards for oil content at 23 percent to assure a consistent eating experience for consumers. Additionally, approximately 5 percent of Chile's avocado crop is organically grown, reports CAIA's Bezart. "It continues to grow at a steady rate."

OFFER RIPE FRUIT

Ripe avocados sell regardless of the region where they're grown. Steve Williams, director of produce and floral for Sweetbay Supermarket, a Tampa, FL-based chain, says, "We have a year-round ripe avocado program and see a consistency in ripeness from all growing regions. The supplier we work with puts ripe stickers on all of their fruit. We wouldn't want to sell it any other way. Many consumers want avocados they can eat the day of purchase."

The ripening of avocados from any country of origin follows the same basic guidelines, says Bezart. "Our importers may utilize different techniques, but just like bananas, once you start the process, avocados will continue to ripen," she explains.

Avocados do not ripen on the tree. Imported Chilean avocados arrive into the United States by boat in controlled atmosphere storage containers. Travel time is about 2½ weeks and shipments are weekly. Once cleared at the port, avocados can then be pre-ripened domestically at an importer's regional facility.

Chilean avocados have traditionally been shipped exclusively to the West Coast. "Today," says Index Fresh's Cavaletto, "about 70 percent of Chilean avocados arrive in Los Angeles, a small amount goes into Houston and 20 percent to ports in Miami and Philadelphia."

"The Northeast and Southeast," adds Calavo's Wedin, "are two of the fastest growing markets for avocado sales." Additionally, many retailers are requesting pre-ripened

avocados, which represents 40 percent of the company's sales, he reports. "We can deliver pre-ripened fruit to retailers anywhere from

**"The highest usage,
all year, is
for entertaining.
Football is the No. 1
entertainment sport
in the country. The
industry is working
toward avocados
being a must-have
for all football
events."**

**— Maggie Bezart
Chilean Avocado
Importers Association**

three to six days a week, whether it's sourced domestically or imported."

Some retailers ripen their own avocados as they do other produce items, which allows them to display ripe as well as breaking fruit, a strategy Bezart recommends. "According to an HAB (Hass Avocado Board) study, almost 50 percent of consumers want to buy unripe fruit," she reports. "Therefore, it is important for retailers to carry a variety of ripeness — firm, breaking and ripe, ready-to-eat fruit — to meet their consumers' consumption needs. Place stickered ripe fruit in a special container, such as a basket, in the front of the avocado display."

MERCHANDISING 101

"A steady availability of good quality fruit is more important to retailers than where the avocados come from," asserts Wedin.

Similarly, some of the tried-and-true merchandising methods that sell avocados in general work for fruit sourced from Chile. "Gone are the days when retailers can afford to have a small display of avocados any time of year," adds Wedin. "They're too big of an item."

CAIA's Bezart says, "Retailers will increase their sales by having a minimum 4-foot display. There's no need to refriger-

ate avocados."

At Econo Foods, avocados are displayed all year long next to the tomatoes, says Weber. "These two items are always together, even in the fall set."

"Avocados make an excellent color break," says Bezart, "when merchandised next to tomatoes, garlic, onions, limes and lemons."

Wedin remarks, "We've seen the most success when avocados are cross-merchandised by the bagged salads."

Offer consumers different options, advises Giumarra's Henry. "For example, display conventional avocados in the produce aisle with cross-promotable items, organic avocados in the organic produce section and bagged avocados in racks by the tortillas."

The majority of avocados are sold in bulk at Sweetbay Supermarkets, says Williams. "However, we do sell a 70 ct in a bag."

"More requests have come in during the past few years for 3- and 5-lb. bags," says Mission's Donovan, "even from traditional retailers, not just the club stores."

Calavo's Wedin adds, "We bag a lot of fruit in general, including Chilean avocados. The benefits of bagged fruit are multiple purchases, which helps to drive volume."

At Econo Foods, Weber likes to put recipes in ad circulars when avocados are on promotion. "An example might be guacamole or a hamburger with an avocado topping," he details.

SEASONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Fall football is one of the most popular themes used to promote Chilean avocados at Econo Foods. Weber explains, "We'll build overflow displays with 20 cases or more at a time when there's a big game and avocados are on promotion."

Fall and winter is an amazing time for avocados, says CAIA's Bezart. "The highest usage, all year, is for entertaining. Football is the No. 1 entertainment sport in the country. The industry is working toward avocados being a must-have for all football events." To capitalize on this theme, she recommends, "Create a Game Day display for guacamole with chips, salsa, party bowls, spice mixes, beer and wine. Utilize creative POS to make eye-catching displays that draw customers into a must-buy decision."

Some importers offer special fall-themed display bins for Halloween, playing off of avocados' ghoulish green color.

Giumarra's Henry adds, "Avocados can be promoted as an after-Thanksgiving complement to the turkey sandwich via ad opportunities, displays and promotions or cross promotions."

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days to promote Chilean avocados, says Wedin. "We'll see a big 1-week promotion then nothing for the next six weeks. This can create a dysfunction in distribution. Instead, stage on-and-off promotions. Prices will often be better between the holidays. Then, for a big holiday, the best retailers will start advertising avocados two to three weeks in advance."

This season, CAIA will offer a number of vertically integrated programs with sports and health themes. These include media buys and promotions in major market areas, radio sports sponsorships of NCAA football,

sponsorship of nationally televised championship college football games, professional soccer sponsorship with Chivas USA, sponsorship of the American Youth Soccer Organization and an Avocado Lovers Club consumer social-networking contest that will tie into sports messaging and the health initiatives of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move* campaign. CAIA will once again work with retailers on customized promotional programs, such as retail display contests.

DISPLAY CONTESTS SELL

Last season's record Chilean avocado

crop created an ideal opportunity to promote the fruit at retail. Sweetbay Supermarket's Williams says, "The folks at CAIA came to us in early July with the forecast of a bountiful crop and a baseball-themed promotional program that they had obviously done their homework on, especially with regards to the POP materials, which tied into a sports theme, and we had a lot of baseball going on in the area at the time. The promotion also offered an opportunity to tie into other departments beyond produce for incremental sales. Avocados are a destination category for us so it was a great opportunity."

The customized CAIA promotion with Sweetbay included a radio buy in the Tampa market and a consumer contest. Both of these supported the retailer's in-store Grab Some for the Game themed display contest, which ran from October 7 to 20. Approximately 90 percent of the 104 stores participated with creative and elaborate displays. Entries were judged not just on size, but also on creativity, shop-ability, cross-merchandising and signing. The grand prize was cash and a special dinner with Food Network star, Ingrid Hoffman, in Tampa.

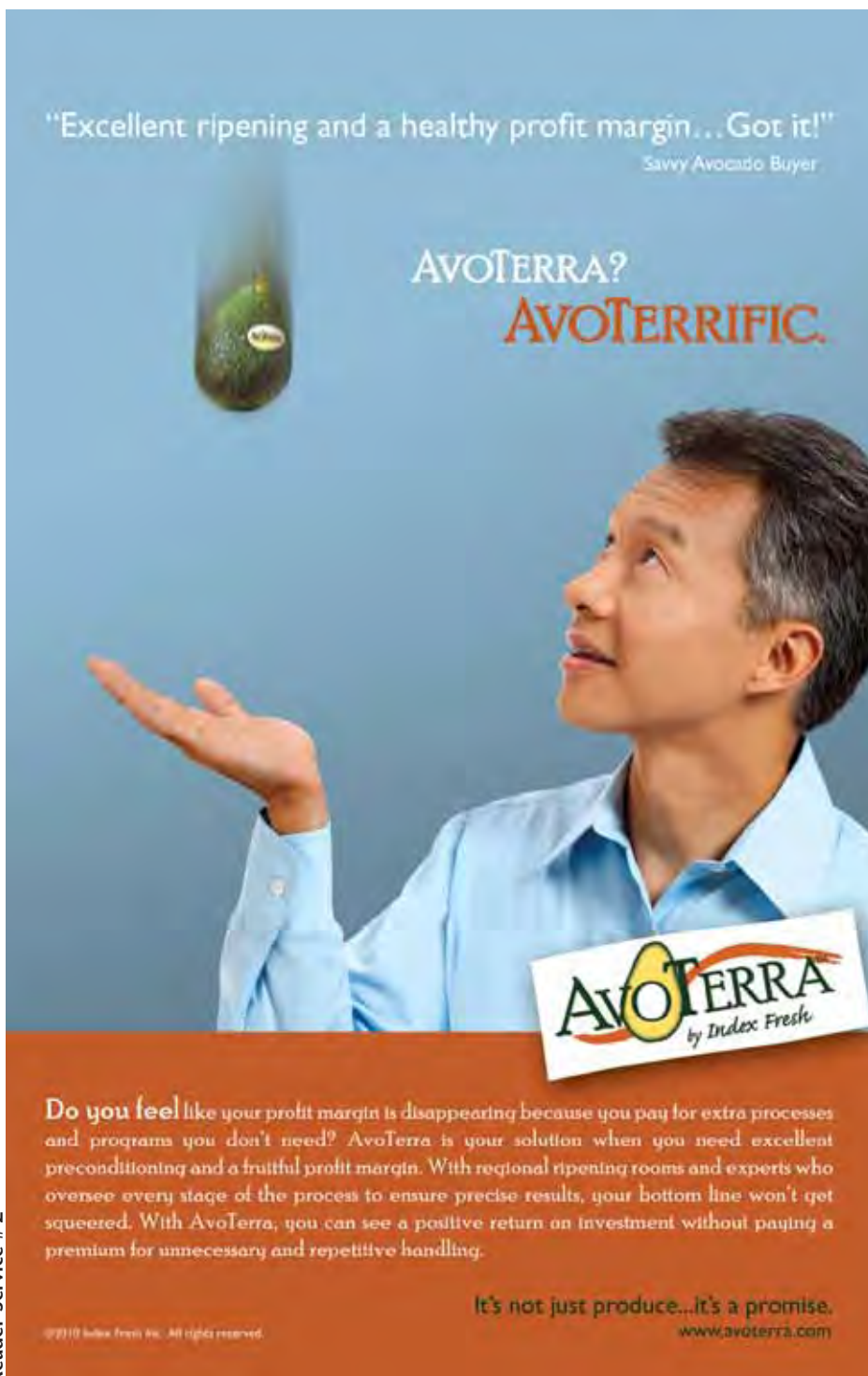
In addition to the display contest, the stores also ran a sales contest. Winners were those who increased avocado sales as a percent of their total produce sales, which made it fair across stores of different sizes.

Williams sent out weekly updates about who was in the lead in the sales contest. "If you don't give updates, a promotion can die. When you do, it creates a feeding frenzy, a lot of fun and greater success." The promotion was indeed successful. "We saw a strong double-digit sales increase of Chilean avocados," says Williams. "We plan to run the promotion again this year."

On the West Coast, Grocery Outlet also ran a successful display and sales contests in partnership with CAIA. The contest ran from December 6 to January 2. Olson says, "The majority were either large lobby displays, bin or Euro table displays in the produce department. Some stores set sidewalk displays in front of the store. They all had holiday themes. My favorite was a store in Gilroy that set up a few slanted Euro tables with avocados on either side, tomatoes running up the middle as a color break and in the back they had a Christmas tree with dry packets of guacamole mix hanging off the tree like ornaments."

The avocado category represented 5.5 percent of total produce sales at Grocery Outlet during the contests. "In addition," says Olson, "the category as a whole was up 113.8 percent during the promotional time period. In our minds, it was an extremely successful promotion."

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Smart Promotions Will Move California Fall Grapes

New varieties help enhance appeal.

BY CHUCK GREEN

The notion that summer's twilight also signals the retreat of the California grape season appears to be quickly dispelled by the availability of a cornucopia of tasty new varieties of grapes. Many of these varieties have evolved into fall staples and holiday favorites, which undoubtedly has snared the attention of most savvy retailers, industry experts declare.

California plays an important part of the year-round supply cycle of fresh market grapes, says Tim Dayka, partner and sales director at Dayka & Hackett LLC, in Reedley, CA, who notes the spike in additional types of the grapes over the past 10 years in the United States, including Princess and Autumn King, among greens, and reds, such as Scarlett Royal, Sweet Scarlet and Vintage. Ultimately, Dayka believes that the selection of any piece of fruit is more about quality and condition than where it came from. "Does it look and taste good?"



Bags remain the most popular type of packaging due to their lower cost and convenience in packing and handling.

When the subject is California grapes, the answer is a resounding yes to Bill Kelley, assistant director of produce procurement for Hy-Vee Inc., in West Des Moines, IA. "The new varieties have been great; the growers keep fine-tuning them and they get better and better," notes Kelley. California grapes are a "steady" commodity for Hy-Vee, says Kelley, who adds that between the different varieties, the store advertises grapes nearly every week, with one color or another. Grapes are one of the chain's largest categories year around, he concludes.

There's also a matter of the bottom line. According to Nick Dulcich, one of the family owners of Jacov Dulcich and Sons LLC, in Delano, CA, grapes yield the dollar volume that retailers are looking for during the fall selling season. Nothing else during this period returns the ad and weekly retail dollars a produce department needs to succeed, explains Dulcich.

GENERATE HIGH DOLLARS

It's certainly what retailers like Publix Super Markets, in Lakeland, FL, want. A grape ad can generate high dollars during the late season, though not as much as bananas, which top the list, says Shannon Patten, media and community relations manager. "I'd say that the sales, more so than the actual dollars, help make the department a success."

It doesn't mean there are at least a few sticking points selling the grapes come fall, though Steve Kenfield, vice president of marketing and business development for The HMC Group Marketing Inc., in Kingsburg CA, says grapes are of the same nature as dealing with other type of produce. "For instance, conditions like we have now with the crop running late or those stemming from atypically heavy rains in the middle of last year's grape harvest were no different than those encountered by fruits like strawberries and cherries," he points out.

President of Delano, CA-based Jasmine Vineyard, Jon Zaninovich, believes the majority of retailers price California grapes reasonably in the fall, which further encourages sales of the highly popular item. However, he wishes some would

Consumers Want Options

While effective packaging is an important aspect of product appeal, in light of the current economy, cost considerations also can be a factor, says president of Delano, CA-based Jasmine Vineyard, Jon Zaninovich. For the time being, because of its relatively reasonable cost, bags probably will remain the primary type of packaging by which to move product, he says. He attributes that to their relative inexpensiveness compared to clamshells, which carry a higher price tag.

"I think clamshells are a good way of moving grapes for certain avenues, like club stores, but not for everyone," says Zaninovich. On the other hand, most chains operate on ad pricing and normal spot market conditions, where ups and downs are fairly common, and since most grapes are normally packed in bags, that represents their most consistent supply.

While Gordon Robertson, vice president of sales and marketing for Bakersfield, CA-based Sun World International LLC, agrees that bags are the way to go in difficult economic times, Sun World's clamshell volume virtually has doubled almost every year since it introduced them in 2006, he points out. However, this past year was the first time sales lagged from the previous year, although conditions appear to be recovering this year, he adds. "Sun World uses bags about 80 percent of the time," Robertson reports. Ultimately, due to costs, he doesn't foresee the industry shifting completely to clamshells.

"They're easy to pack and handle," says Dave Parker, director of marketing for Scattaglia Growers & Shippers, in Traver, CA, of bags, which he notes are, by far, dominant in the industry.

Whether they zip or slide to lock to hold grapes in place, Nick Dulcich, one of the family owners of Jacov Dulcich and Sons LLC, headquartered in Delano, CA, adds that bags are "the norm" for convenience and portability.

Perhaps, but Reedley, CA-based Dayka & Hackett LLC, uses clamshells, which Tim Dayka, partner and sales director says continue to gain a larger market share and percentage of sales than over the past several years. In fact, they represent 35 percent of the company's sales, his says, and points to their upside in terms of merchandising and

convenience. "Any sort of shelf-life issue becomes an advantage for clamshells."

In fact, Jim Llano, sales manager for Castle Rock Vineyards, in Delano, CA, indicates the industry's slowly trending toward greater use of clamshells. The club stores have predominantly featured 4-by-4 unit clams, but this past season there was a greater demand for 10-by-2 unit clams among wholesale and major retailer, he says. Llano adds that the increase in truck freight rates and buyers' focus on cost of goods turned the 10-by-2 into an "attractive" purchase and has facilitated increased truck loading.

Unquestionably, grapes remain fresh longer in a clamshell and are better protected than in a bag, Dayka adds. Some of his company's customers merchandise clamshells alongside the bags, while others merchandise clamshells solely, especially since clamshells show off multi-colored grapes better than bags, Dayka reports. "That's not to mention safety issues that retailers might face using bags instead of clamshells," he emphasizes. For example, it's less likely that grapes will fall out of a clamshell, which helps to reduce possible incidences of slipping and falling among shoppers and insurance related issues.

For its part, Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets uses clamshells for combination grapes, says Shannon Paten, media and community relations manager. Ultimately, the future of packaging will be determined by cost, she notes. "The industry is still trying to understand how much a customer's willing to pay for such a package."

While he says bags are more inexpensive than clamshells, Parker of Scattaglia feels that packing organics in clamshells could generate an opportunity for a "slightly" higher sales price.

Historically, Hy-Vee Inc., in West Des Moines, IA, has used bags. Of late, however, the store also has experimented with clamshells, says Bill Kelley, assistant director of produce procurement. But likely due to cost, being a single-unit price point rather than a per-pound price, "they haven't been a hit with our customers yet," he admits. In addition to the extra packaging expenses of clamshells, "you're forcing them to buy two or three pounds," depending on the size package a retailer carries. Nevertheless, Hy-Vee will continue to use both, he notes. **pb**

reconsider their pricing strategy. While acknowledging that pricing strategies are strictly their call, he simply would like to see more chains focus as much on California grapes as they do other items entering the produce department in the fall. The solution? Keep more grape products stocked during the holidays and promote the fact there's a California product in the fall that they should commit to, along with other products that enjoy high sales.

Nevertheless, Don Goforth, director of marketing for Family Tree Farms Marketing LLC, in Reedley, CA, raises the specter of "grape fatigue" among some consumers following summer-long consumption of the product. Goforth suggests that the presence of later season California grapes could lead to an "oversupply" of the fruit. At the same time, however, he notes that later season California grapes typically are superior to others. "We feel they hold the best and often are the biggest," he says.

To combat possible grape fatigue, Jim Howard, executive director of the Fresno-based California Table Grape Commission, says his organization applies a full court press to ensure consumers are reminded constantly that grapes are freshly harvested in California from May through December. With a harvest in December, grapes from California can be available at retail in January and sometimes February, he adds.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CHANGES IN FALL

Even so, retailers must contend with the fact that consumers' behavior changes in the fall, with fewer outdoor activities where items like California grapes often crop up, says Gordon Robertson, vice president of sales and marketing for Bakersfield, CA-based Sun World International LLC. Not only that, grapes are often allocated less space during that time of the year as retailers make way for products like fall vegetables, he adds. However, by following that strategy, retailers are missing an opportunity to capitalize on one of the most profitable fall fruits, he cautions. Instead, they might be better served by carving out about 32 square feet of shelf space in the fall, which can help them generate "significant" increases in sales dollars and volume due to the impulse nature of the category," he suggests.

However, due mainly to quality issues, Hy-Vee's Kelley believes there's merit to pulling California grapes from shelves into the fall. "If California still has a good looking grape and it still eats well, there's no reason not to stay in California as late as possible, especially since sales will drop as the availability of the grapes do," he explains. Typi-

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cally, though, at the end of the season, the condition of California grapes aren't particularly optimal and other varieties become preferable, like those from Chile.

Says Dayka of Dayka & Hackett: "There's no question; quality sells." If a supermarket elects to represent a certain type of quality, whether it's flavor, color or berry size, they have to determine what they believe to be the best value and the best product for their customer, he adds.

Space aside, one thing that discourages customers is when retailers randomly add any new variety to their shelves and expect

consumers to blindly embrace it, warns John O'Rourke, president of RJO Produce Marketing, in Fresno, CA. Instead, he encourages growers to meet with produce managers and inspectors on the retail side and brief them on the latest information regarding a new item that they can pass along to shoppers.

According to Dave Parker, director of marketing for Scattaglia Growers & Shippers in Traver, CA, "If we're going to develop a plethora of varieties, they all have to be introduced to the shopper. We can't take for granted that they'll simply buy them and understand what they are."

"Industry research finds that three promotions per month — compared to two or four — is ideal for category sales."

**— Dave Parker
Scattaglia Growers & Shippers**

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Kelley notes that anytime he introduces a new variety, Hy-Vee immediately educates its produce managers and personnel through email correspondence and point-of-purchase materials from suppliers. Then, as the product is brought to market, the chain supports it with advertising as well as samplings. "It seems to be the best way for us to get people to try a new item, especially in the grape category," he remarks. It pays dividends, too. For instance, despite their longevity and flavor, consumers still aren't all that familiar with black grapes, explains Kelley. "They've been around forever and are some of the best, sweetest tasting grapes out there, but sometimes it takes getting them into people's mouths before they'll buy them."

According to industry data, primary grape shoppers are women aged 25-64, and 71 percent of their shopping takes place Friday through Sunday. Consequently, the best time to expand grape displays would be during these peak shopping times, points out Parker. Peak hours and holidays are ideal times to stage taste tests, he adds.

Through its advertising, Sun World invests considerable time building its brands for fall, including Scarlotta Seedless and Midnight Beauty, Robertson details. Retailers also communicate to customers information about the characteristics of various grapes, their heritage and their distinguishing characteristics. "It gives them a chance to differentiate themselves and offer their consumers something they can't find elsewhere."

CORRECT MIX

To address all customer preferences

Fall, Winter Forecast

At the moment, expectations are for manageable, evenly dispersed volumes of all varieties in the mid and late table grape-producing districts, adds Jim Llano, sales manager for Castle Rock Vineyards, in Delano, CA. While Red Seedless varieties generally were in short supply last year, this year, he says the company expects increases in those grape types, particularly Crimson and Flame. He reports that the mid- and late-table grape season usually continues through the end of the year and that most of California's table grape production now is geared toward "the late deal," with 60 percent of the volume currently produced in the fall.

Shannon Patten, media and community relations manager for Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets, calls the outlook for late season grapes in 2010 favorable, despite the fact that California experienced only fair weather this year and the season was 10 days behind schedule. Under "normal circumstances," even with a later season than normal, the industry remains committed to late-season grapes and therefore must closely monitor the varieties, she adds.

While those at Delano, CA-based Sun World International LLC are confident

that the company's farms and ranches are producing adequate volumes, Gordon Robertson, vice president of sales and marketing, admits there was pricing pressure as production — starting in Chile and spreading into areas like Mexico — backed up, and the industry as a whole has fought a later start to the domestic season. While he says there were some challenges getting into and out of those different regions, Sun World, from a volume perspective, expects to be roughly caught up by approximately the end of August and views fall as another key season to solidify its position with its customers and consumers.

"Grapes are considered somewhat of an impulse buy, but it would be wonderful for the industry if retailers would offer them in the range of \$1.29 to \$1.69," says president of Delano, CA-based Jasmine Vineyard, Jon Zaninovich. "Again, those are decisions for individual retailers, but I really do think they'd be met with results that might surprise and satisfy their objectives." Robertson echoes that sentiment, stressing that retailers must put the right value on a product and that value is a combination of price and quality, especially as the fall season beckons. **pb**

when considering the correct mix, Sun World stocks all three colors, says Robertson. That means carrying reds, like Scarlotta Seedless and Crimsons; greens, including Autumn Kings and Thompsons; and blacks such as Midnight Beauty and Autumn Royal. Doing so allows retailers to hold all three colors through the fall to fully leverage consumer demand, Robertson adds. Dulcich details that a "typical" display consists of 50 percent red grapes, 40 percent green and 10 percent black.

Hy-Vee tries to carry as many varieties as possible of whatever's available, says Kelley. While the store doesn't necessarily carry all varieties, it does stock a red, green and black, including the Princess, Scarlotta, and Holiday grapes, a late season proprietary variety, which it sells alongside its Red Seedless, he points out.

Invariably, there's no such thing as an "absolute" correct mix of fall varieties, indicates Jim Llano, sales manager for Castle Rock Vineyards, in Delano, CA. While varieties have changed over the past generation,

niche markets remain for some of the older seeded fall varieties, though they are no longer grown in volume, he says. For example, Calmeria's a strong, large, seeded, late green grape which still has some export appeal to Central America and a few niche markets domestically, explains Llano. While there was a "phenomenal" demand for Red Globes a decade ago, the markets have changed and growers have looked to many of the newer Red Seedless varieties such as Scarlet Royal, he continues.

Since tastes obviously vary among individuals, HMC's Kenfield adds that retailers will stock Red Seedless and Black Seedless grapes until they give way to Southern Hemispheres, and will extend new varieties longer, giving consumers added choices.

COLORFUL PROMOTIONS

One strategy that has caught on is the use of colorful promotions to help abet sales, suggests HMC's Kenfield, who emphasizes that with the use of multiple colors in the fall and large displays, retailers can

aggressively promote California grapes. "Even if you were to have large displays with fewer items, the fact you've got large displays will give the impression of a complete range," he explains.

Dulcich adds, "Large displays of eye-catching color mix and large berry size make up successful displays, and retailers can also take advantage of marketing vendor packaging and POP materials."

At the same time, the California Table Grape Commission advises advertising grapes only about three weeks out of every month to avoid overkill and possibly dilute the message. "Industry research finds that three promotions per month — compared to two or four — is ideal for category sales. While shoppers seem to respond to frequent grape promotions, it becomes routine unless there's a periodic break," notes Parker.

Castle Rock's Llano notes that promoting different varieties helps educate consumers in terms of their flavors and characteristics. As the varieties change over the course of a month, promotions can be made to stimulate sale and educate the consumer, he comments.

As with any commodity, Goforth of Family Farms believes as promotions go, "the bigger the display, the more confidence a consumer is going to feel in that item." If the retailer is confident enough in a product to build a "great" display, the thought process is "it must be good," he says. On the other hand, small displays suggest lack of confidence in an item and the belief that a retailer doesn't think it will sell, Goforth continues.

Late season displays, especially, need to be large to accommodate a plethora of interesting colors and color separation options, Goforth adds. "It's a beautiful way to build a display," he says. Additionally, secondary displays in the meat department also can be effective, especially in the fall, he continues. "Retailers must understand the mindset of consumers and why a purchase is being made, then seek opportunities to grab those dollars as well."

Since the number of varieties also is key, it is important to continue to grow them in multiples, which will help drive a retailer's list of items. "When you use two varieties in an ad, you're going to see roughly a 36 percent category volume lift; when you have four varieties on ad, you can get up to 59 percent lift," notes Robertson. Therefore, if retailers generate additional varieties, they can drive more consumption, he says. "If you want to maximize the volume associated with it, but can't do it every week, those front pages can generate significant volume and traffic." **pb**

Idaho Potatoes: Ready To Soar Back After Plenty Of Pressure

Cautious optimism is the tone of the times as Idaho potato growers, packers and shippers prepare for the 2010 harvest starting — probably — in September.

BY MEREDITH AUERBACH

The past year has been a tough one for potato growers and shippers.

Big crops from Idaho and its major competitors of Washington, Colorado and Wisconsin resulted in supply exceeding demand. The recession-slammed foodservice industry has absorbed much less volume. Trade spats with Mexico have reduced exports to that country by almost 50 percent. Many on the supply side have experienced negative returns.

2010 OUTLOOK

Seth Pemsler, vice president retail for the Eagle, ID-based Idaho Potato Commission points to brighter days ahead. He says, "In August, the market price for russets strengthened and movement is stable. Retail has increased movement as consumers react to the recession."

For the coming crop, Jim Richter, senior vice president of retail relations at Wilcox Marketing

Group, headquartered in Rexburg, ID, reports, "We've had a cold, wet, windy spring putting stress on the plants and causing a delay of two to three weeks. What sounds like bad news is likely to turn out positively. Fewer tubers per plant often mean better size, less yield and more normal production. With a clean break in August, we can start fresh with the new crop."

Crop estimates for fresh Idaho potatoes, both russets and thin-skinned specialty varieties, are tricky and not made early. Based on quality and demand, volumes swing between fresh and processed product. Origin has an impact with implications of freight cost, the local movement and Idaho's brand strength.

IDAHO IS THE BRAND

The Idaho brand carries value in the eyes of growers, shippers, retailers and consumers, even with the onslaughts of marketing efforts by competitor states, high fuel costs and the local trend. Betty Tanner, vice president of fresh sales for the vertically integrated agricultural operation Sun-Glo of Idaho Inc., in Sugar City, ID, points out, "In the end, it's about quality. That's what maintains the brand. While we're known in the industry for our state-of-the-art machinery; our real strength is the ability to pack 3 percent to grade, well above the USDA standard of 8 percent."

"For us, quality is our major marketing tool," echoes Ryan Bybee, sales manager for GPOD of Idaho, headquartered in Shelley, ID. "We buy the quality we want from independent Idaho growers and then grade and pack all consumer grades and sizes for our customers."

"Potatoes are an important category to any retail store," comments Mel Davenport, senior vice president of operations for Potandon Produce LLC, located in Idaho Falls, ID. "Think about how important they are to the diet and the value they represent, especially in tight economic times."

Steve Duello, director of produce operations



Buehlers Fresh Foods, in Wooster, OH, won First Place in the 10+ Cash Registers category of the 19th annual IPC Display Contest.

Photo courtesy of Idaho Potato Commission



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for Dierberg's Markets Inc., a 23-store chain with home offices in Chesterfield, MO, reports, "We supply what our customers want. They like the Idaho russet, but they also insist on value. All other things being equal, I'd say, they prefer Idaho as the source."

"It's important for every link in the supply chain to keep differentiation top of mind," believes Richter, bringing together his many years of both retail and supply side experience and knowledge. "Our major customer focus looks at the com-


plete product line-up. We work to identify and define the points of difference in terms of product, package grade and size. For both russets and specialty potatoes, the range of Idaho products helps to create that differentiation at retail."

THE CHALLENGE OF PRICING

With excess supply and low FOB pricing, many growers and shippers took a heavy revenue hit. At the same time, retail pricing tended to be stable. Steve Nyberg,


produce supervisor for Food Giant, a Sikeston, MO, chain of 21 stores, says, "For us, we price Idaho potatoes a bit higher than other potatoes. They have great eye appeal and the extra lets us promote more. On a department level, it also helps us with other products."

IPC's Pemsler adds, "Over the past several years, retail margins have increased and yet volume moved is still good. Consumers are also shifting somewhat from 5-lb. to 10-lb. bags to increase value of the purchase. Five-pound bags still dominate, but not by as much."



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Annual IPC Display Contest Keeps Idaho Potatoes Front and Center

February 2010 kicked off the start to the Idaho Potato Commission's 19th annual retail display contest as a major component of Potato Lover's Month. Retail stores build eye-popping displays using Idaho russets and other Idaho specialty potato products along with partner tie-ins such as Molly McButter and Mrs. Dash from January 25 through February 26. Photo submissions are due in March to allow ample time for review and blind judging and the announcement of the winners follows in May. In 2010, 2,300 entries vied for a share of the \$150,000 in prizes, including an indoor-outdoor speaker for every qualified entry.

Steve Nyberg, produce supervisor for Food Giant, Sikeston, MO, "I'm responsible for 21 stores and I strongly encourage every one of them to participate in the display contest. We use an in-house contest at the same time to spread the word and keep staff excited about the contest. It's great for the staff, the customers and it really builds potato sales during the period. Over the years, we've had many winners in the national contest."

It's a great way to sell potatoes, although reporting sales results is not part of the contest. What is required is inclusion of all Idaho potato and partner products, themed POS materials, logos and seals. The bigger, the better.

Prizes first through fifth place in groups are determined by the number of store cash registers: one to five, six to nine, and 10 or more. The top prize in each group is \$1,500 and scales down to \$250 for fifth place. Honorable mention winners pick up \$100. There are two separate groups for military retail sales in the East and West.

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Photo courtesy of Wada Farms

Shelf-stable, steam-in-the-bag options provide convenience for retailers and consumers alike.

MORE THAN RUSSETS

While about 90 percent of the Idaho crop is russets, specialty potatoes including reds, Yukon Gold, fingerling, creamers and exotics add some excitement to a stable, rather traditional category. It's where efforts to add value are focused. "Specialty potatoes have been growing at a rate of 2 to 3 percent per year," reports Rod Lake, owner of Southwind Farms Inc., headquartered in Heyburn, ID, "However, we see russets with some decline in fresh volume at retail. We specialize in long fingerlings and our best market is foodservice. That said, there is

"Consumers are also shifting somewhat from 5-lb. to 10-lb. bags to increase value of the purchase. Five-pound bags still dominate, but not by much."

**— Seth Pemsler
Idaho Potato Commission**

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...Quality!

Even though the new cover of our 50 lb. ultra graphic carton says a thousand words, we're only concerned about one - Quality! Throughout the industry, Sun-Glo of Idaho has earned a reputation of producing the highest quality potatoes available anywhere. To maintain this high standard, only the finest soil, cleanest water, and best location is used to grow Sun Supreme Premium Quality Russet Burbank Potatoes. For your convenience, we also offer product packaging from 5 lb. mesh or poly bags to 100 lb. burlap sacks in the ideal sized Russet for your particular needs.

By placing the highest degree of importance on customer satisfaction, Sun-Glo of Idaho provides a consistent quality product any time of the year to satisfy food service and retail needs. And with the large volume of potatoes handled at the Sun-Glo plant, you are guaranteed the sizes and quantities you need when you need them.

With consistent results, quality service, and delicious potatoes, it is easy to see the dedication and loyalty of our great team. Come experience the dependability and exceptional quality of Sun-Glo!



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increasing retail interest in varieties such as Russian Banana, Ruby Crescent, red French fingerling potatoes and Purple Peruvians packed in a 24-oz. poly bag. For retailers, these potatoes add revenue. We find we are also able to add a pallet to the potato shipment of another grower or shipper to give better variety and service to a retailer."

New packaging is another sign of the times. Wada Farms Marketing Group LLC, based in Idaho Falls, ID, grows, packs and co-packs a full line of potato varieties under a series of labels and is the sole licensee for Dole. According to Kevin Stanger, senior vice president of sales and marketing, "We have four facilities to produce micro-wrap russets, tray-packed russets, a steamable bag of various thin-skinned potatoes and combinations. Convenience is built in for consumers and retailers because all of these packs are shelf stable — there's no need for a separate refrigerated display."

Wilcox's Richter agrees on the importance of display at room temperature. "We've gone a bit further with our Potato Jazz line of potato products," he reports. "The consumer buys them at the regular potato display; then adds a tablespoon of olive oil or butter and mixes it with the included seasoning packet before steaming the tray in the microwave. The graphic cover over the tray not only presents an appetizing suggestion, but also blocks light and helps prevent greening in the potatoes."

Whatever the choice of consumers, be it bulk russets or value-added microwave steamers, the wide range of Idaho potatoes continues to satisfy both consumers' and retailers' needs.

pb



CORRUGATED: THE RESPONSIBLE PACKAGE FOR PRODUCE

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Fibre Box Association
American Forest & Paper Association
Association of Independent Corrugated Converters

CORRUGATED: The Responsible Package

Corrugated packaging has always been a great choice: renewable and recyclable, sustainable, functional, versatile and cost-efficient. Corrugated is an end-product of sustainable farming — governed by Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) guidelines and manufacturing practices, designed to preserve the long-term productivity of carefully managed land resources — just as today's fruit and vegetable crops are managed with a sustainable future in mind. Today there's new evidence supporting corrugated's leading position in the produce packaging business:

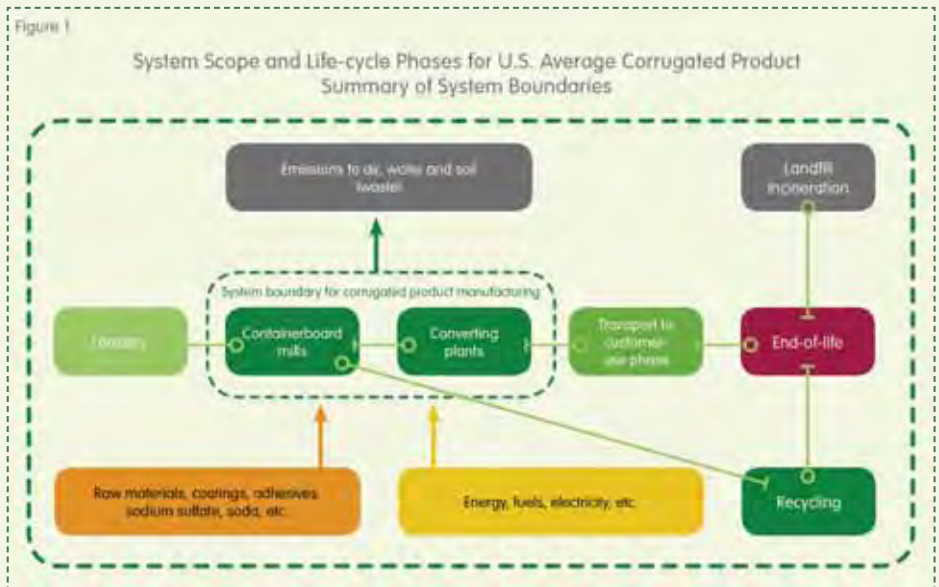
- A brand-new life-cycle study's been done, assigning substantiated, numerical values to corrugated's environmental performance and providing benchmarks so that future improvements can also be measured and documented.
- New recycling statistics show continued growth in corrugated's stellar recovery record: over 81 percent of production successfully recovered in 2009, more than any other packaging material anywhere!
- And new recyclable wax alternatives for produce packaging continue making their way to market, helping increase recovery even more for applications where recycling was historically most challenging — such as in containers

that require moisture protection for shipping certain wet, hydrocooled or ice-packed commodities.

For decades, produce shippers have been sending products across town, around the country and throughout the world in corrugated containers, confi-

enviro-conscious shippers, retailers and consumers alike, who could rest easy knowing that the corrugated box was made and used with minimal impact on our environment.

Decision-makers today are more knowledgeable and require more infor-



dent in their safe arrival at nearby or far-flung destinations. Not only has it been working, corrugated has been the best choice for growing legions of

mation than ever to back up their choices. Growing interest in the facts behind packaging's sustainability and environmental performance has

GOT QUESTIONS?

What is the carbon footprint of corrugated?

A carbon footprint is a measure of impact on the environment, and climate change in particular. It relates to the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) produced through burning fossil fuels for electricity, heating, transportation, etc., so it is primarily related to energy consumption.

The carbon footprint is a measurement of all GHGs produced and is measured in units of tons (or kg) of carbon dioxide equivalents.

The corrugated industry Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) shows that the carbon footprint for the cradle-to-cradle life cycle of a 1 kg U.S. industry-average corrugated product is approximately 1 kg of carbon dioxide equivalents. This value applies to the complete life cycle, so any attempt to use it in comparisons would require comparative data for matched system scope, boundaries and functional unit.

How does the environmental impact of corrugated packaging compare with other types of packaging?

The corrugated LCA did not attempt to compare corrugated with other materials or products. While it's natural to want to make comparisons, it's not simple. Size, manufacturing conditions, application, distance transported, end-of-life (EoL) management and many other situation-specific factors affect a product's environmental impact.

To compare the results of the corrugated industry's LCA against another product, one would need to first establish comparable functional units for study, system scope, boundaries, etc., and other parameters as defined in ISO 14040 guidelines, including critical review by a panel of experts. Watch out for any comparisons that haven't covered these critical bases, because their assertions are meaningless!



spurred a burgeoning use of life-cycle analysis (LCA) studies to substantiate marketing claims and purchasing decisions.

The corrugated industry has done its homework to help packaging users do theirs — providing the facts you need to

make informed decisions. So you can rely on your positive experience with corrugated over the years (protecting and merchandising your product at a reasonable cost) — and now you can back it up with the facts that show it's a great choice for the environment and

the planet, too.

The Life Cycle Report can be found at www.corrugated.org, along with explanatory materials such as frequently-asked questions (FAQ).

Wax Alternatives Proliferation Expands Corrugated Recycling

Traditionally, some corrugated containers have been treated with wax coatings to provide moisture and vapor protection for safely transporting products requiring it (such as broccoli, usually packed in ice). Wax coatings do not dissolve in water, so they create problems in the repulping process. The corrugated industry has worked painstakingly to develop recyclable alternatives, many of which are now becoming commercially available.

In 2005, the corrugated industry developed a new recyclability standard that allows these alternatives to be tested, proven and certified recyclable if they pass the required protocol.

A new survey of corrugated manufacturers reveals a continued increase in the use of certified, recyclable alternatives to wax. The study found recently commercialized alternative coatings have yielded promising results:

- In 2009, the corrugated industry shipped 3,181 million square feet of boxes using recyclable wax alternative coat-

ings. That's over 18% more than the 2,683 million square feet shipped in 2008 and 143% more than 2002, dramatically increasing the volume of containers that could be recycled.

- Progress has been made in replacing all types of wax treated boxes (cascaded, impregnated, curtain-coated) with recyclable treated boxes.

- Twenty-three recyclable wax alternatives have passed certification testing and have been registered with the Fibre Box Association as of July, 2010, each replacing a wax cascaded, impregnated or surface coating application.

For more information, or for a recycling poster, please contact the Corrugated Packaging Alliance at 800.886.5255 or visit <http://www.corrugated.org/WaxAlternatives>.



How do I specify and purchase corrugated packaging to minimize my environmental impact?

The corrugated industry has a long history of sustainable manufacturing and design. Your corrugated supplier can help you design a package optimized for performance as well as use of fiber and resources. Performance is critical to protect your products in shipping and prevent incremental waste caused by package failure. (Did you know that packaging represents only 3 percent to 15 percent of a product's total environmental impact? The rest comes from the product itself, so protecting it from damage and premature disposal is very important to the planet!)

How can recycling corrugated make a difference?

Old corrugated containers (OCC), recovered for recycling, become important raw materials for the manufacture of new products. The LCA also shows that 42 percent of the global warming potential (GWP) impact from corrugated packaging is caused by the small percentage of OCC that goes to landfills at EoL. So yes — recycling corrugated makes an important difference, and improving OCC recovery is one of the ways in which we can help the corrugated industry continue to improve its environmental footprint.



**CORRUGATED
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ALLIANCE**

The Corrugated Packaging Alliance (www.corrugated.org) is a corrugated industry initiative jointly sponsored by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) (www.afandpa.org), the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters (AICC) (www.aiccbox.org) and the Fibre Box Association (FBA) (www.fibrebox.org).

International Paper's Corrugated Wax Alternative Packaging

The use of recyclable alternatives to waxed corrugated has grown dramatically as suppliers and retailers increase emphasis on sustainability. In 2008, the corrugated industry shipped more than twice the amount of boxes using recyclable wax alternatives shipped in 2002, marking significant progress in replacing all types of wax treated boxes (cascaded, impregnated, curtain-coated) with recyclable treated boxes.

International Paper (IP), a member of the Fibre Box Association (FBA), has experienced success in the rollout and commercialization of its ClimaSeries® family of wax alternatives. "We have seen interest in recyclable products at all levels of the supply chain, and demand is growing," said Lin Moses, Marketing Manager at IP. "All of our recyclable products have passed the FBA protocol for recyclability and repulpability, allowing us to issue certificates to our customers assuring them the product meets the standard set by the FBA," added Lin. ClimaSeries® products are available to replace wax-impregnated medium, curtain-coated liners, and wax-cascaded cartons. Demand for these wax alternative cartons has grown in multiple end-use segments such as poultry, produce, and seafood.

One such adopter of wax alternative packaging is Ocean Mist Farms. Ocean Mist was seeking an alternative to its wax-cascaded carton used for products such as broccoli, celery, and romaine lettuce. In early 2009, Ocean Mist began testing a wax alternative ClimaSeries® package from International Paper for several products and was pleased with the results from this recyclable carton.



Sustainability commitment

We are building sustainability into your business. On a system-wide basis, containerboard and corrugated packaging from International Paper is:

- Made from 100% renewable forest fiber procured in accordance with SFI standards
- Contains an average of 32% post-consumer and 38% total recycled fiber content
- Manufactured with over 70% biomass energy
- Designed to reduce the amount of packaging material required to achieve optimal strength and reduce total supply chain costs
- Recyclable, reusable, compostable, and less likely to end up in landfills



Grows Dramatically



"ClimaSeries® cartons give us the opportunity to offer our trade customers an environmentally friendly packaging option for our hydro-cooled and iced product. We've been able to give our trade customers quantifiable improvements to their own carbon footprint simply with their purchase of Ocean Mist Farms commodities that are packed in a ClimaSeries® carton versus the traditional, industry standard of a waxed carton." - Kori Tuggle, Marketing Manager Ocean Mist Farms.

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Performance - Boxes that meet or exceed the performance of the entire spectrum of current waxed packaging.

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Recyclable - Unlike wax products, ClimaSeries® boxes are salable through the regular OCC recovery system, meeting the FBA's standard for the recycling of wax alternative materials.

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Meeting the
growing needs of
the agricultural
marketplace



PCA commends the Corrugated Packaging Alliance for conducting the **Corrugated Packaging Life-Cycle Assessment**. This comprehensive study defines, quantifies and illustrates how "... the corrugated industry has operated in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner for over a century."



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PCA is developing new technologies to utilize renewable energy sources.

At our mill in Filer City, Michigan, we have installed a biogas refinery that produces methane gas. It uses bacteria to convert spent cooking liquid into gas without the use of recovery boilers or evaporators, which themselves use considerable energy. The methane is burned as fuel in an existing boiler, replacing less sustainable fuels.

PCA is investing to reduce energy costs and consumption.


As a direct result of new equipment and efficiency improvements, our Valdosta, Georgia, mill will self-generate 100% of its electricity. In addition, a project at our Counce, Tennessee, mill will reduce energy purchases by 50%. From groundbreaking to start-up, these projects are tangible evidence of our commitment to environmental stewardship.

PCA provides a wax-alternative dry box that moves your produce to market.

PCA's corrugated facilities utilize PowerPly™ medium to create versatile packaging that is rigid and able to weather humid conditions, which makes it an ideal wax replacement. The PowerPly™ solution folds and erects well in conventional box folding/gluing equipment. The packer's transition from wax to dry is essentially a seamless event.



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Emerging corrugated packaging trends are having an important impact on the retail produce industry. These trends are reshaping how we think about everyday products and their influence on the environment. In addition to ecological benefits, producers and retailers receive additional advantages of reducing their costs and increasing brand awareness.

SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN INNOVATIONS

Wax Coated Corrugated Alternatives

Corrugated has the highest recycling rate of any packaging material, with a recovery rate of more than 80 percent. Supermarkets lead this effort by recovering more than 90 percent of their used corrugated, which generates substantial revenue and improves profitability¹.

In the produce industry, wax coated corrugated has historically created a problem in the re-pulping process of recycling because wax coatings do not dissolve easily in water. The arrival of wax coating alternatives allows supermarket retailers to recycle more of their used corrugated, leading to increased revenue and improved sustainability.

A Holistic Approach to Packaging Design

Reducing packaging's impact on the environment is exceptionally important. Efficiencies can be made in packaging by approaching production from the supply chain perspective. Reducing the packaging size, even by a small amount, can have a significant impact on the corrugated case design. If a box contains rows of 8 clamshells and the width of that clamshell is reduced by 1/8", the length of the corrugated box (or tray) can be reduced by one full inch. This results in a substantial reduction in fiber, as well as weight and space, creating ultimate savings.

IN-STORE MARKETING INNOVATIONS

As "green" emerges as an important brand differentiator, it adds recognized social benefits to the value proposition for many shoppers. Shoppers demonstrate more loyalty towards sustainable products because they are making personal commitments to social responsibility and are less likely to change brands in the future.

How do you attract this shopper? By communicating to them at the retail level. Corrugated solutions like Retail-Ready Packaging (see side box for more detail on RockTenn's Pop-n-Shop™) provide the vehicle to display your key messages to consumers at the most critical moment: on the shelf, where purchasing decisions are being made.



Retail-Ready Packaging

Retail Ready Packaging (RRP) is easy to shop, identify, open, display, and recycle. The benefits of this are clear for the retailer. For the produce growers and processors, it represents an unprecedented opportunity to communicate a marketing message as the corrugated stays on the shelf – displaying the product on the corrugated package. For example, Pop-n-Shop™ allows the retailer to efficiently display the product while leaving a high impact billboard tray sitting on the shelf relaying important branding information.

¹ Corrugated Packaging Alliance; *Recyclable Alternatives to Waxed Corrugated Shipping Containers*; www.corrugated.org

Corrugated Graphics

Companies have recognized the sales lift that can be achieved by enhancing a package or tray with design and imagery. The outstanding shelf appeal results from exceptional detail and line screen work, grabbing the shopper's immediate attention. Corrugated packaging offers high-end graphic capabilities which are applied to corrugated directly, through lithographic labels or preprinted linerboard. Pre-print linerboard can provide the highest quality graphics at the most economical cost by eliminating redundancies in operations and providing exceptional speed to market.

Corrugated packaging has entered the marketplace helping producers, manufacturers, and retailers become more environmentally conscious. By evaluating your needs from an entire supply chain perspective – from field to shelf – sellers are able to offer more efficient and effective packaging lowering their overall costs and increasing shopper engagement and purchase.

For more information, contact:

Kevin Perry, Director of Business Development
RockTenn Corrugated Packaging
Phone: (678) 291-7334
Email: kperry@rocktenn.com



RockTenn is one of North America's largest pre-printers for corrugated packaging. In the past year, we have experienced double digit growth proving today's preprinted liners offer customers the best return on their packaging dollar. Visit our booth at the Fresh Summit International Convention & Exposition in Orlando, Fl, to see our products first hand.

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RockTenn's Pop-n-Shop™ retail-ready shipper/display meets sustainable retail-ready packaging objectives.



Cost Effective

- Less material than typical 2-piece designs
- Conveyable design lowers distribution costs
- No de-casing of product to stack on the shelf
- Lower labor costs for retailers

High Quality

- Excellent marketing tool
- Strong, protective packaging
- Easy to open
- Efficient

Safe

- No cut knives are required
- No product damage from knife opening

Sustainable

- One piece design
- Recyclable



Pop-N-Shop™ is Patent Pending

Sustainability is the Right Direction

For four days next month – October 15-18 – Orlando, Florida, will be the world's produce center, attracting thousands of growers, shippers, retailers and marketing executives to PMA's International Fresh Summit. The energy generated by that event will resonate in Austin, Texas, too, where for more than 80 years Temple-Inland has created corrugated packaging systems for the safe delivery of fruits and vegetables to America's families.

We champion the benefits of improved sustainability, so we're expanding the development of a growing family of wax-alternative products..."



The event reflects an exceptional harmony in American business enterprise; demonstrating how the produce and corrugated packaging industries work together to support consumer demands for "fresh," satisfying individual choices in variety, taste and nutrition value.

"Putting strawberries on breakfast tables in the winter? Not a problem," says Jeff Grossman, Showcase Group Manager for Temple-Inland. "Packaging know-how makes that happen. And, there's an added sales benefit for the retailer if the strawberry trays are recyclable."

The corrugated packaging industry now offers retailers the opportunity to eliminate the disposal costs of waxed boxes and has created new recycling revenue through the expanding availability of wax alternative packaging. According to the Food Marketing Institute, the average net profit for supermarket operators across the industry is 1.8 percent.

When supermarket management considers their operating budget, the benefits of packaging cost savings have significant impact.

Last year, the 1,100 Publix stores recovered 200,000 tons of OCC as a part of its "Green Routine Program." Wax alternative packaging was introduced gradually by their produce department over the last three years and their increasing use has raised the recovery rate of recyclable OCC.

Michael Hewitt, Manager, Environmental Services, described the company's transition from waxed boxes in a *Produce Business* cover story last year, when Publix was chosen to receive PB's first Annual Retail Sustainability Award: "We were adamant that we will never compromise food safety or quality, so we look for a balance that ensures safety and quality, while providing more recyclable packaging, or even sometimes less packaging."

How do sustainability, OCC recovery and recycling fit with growers in achieving their objectives of efficient farming?

Tom Deardorff, owner of Deardorff Family Farms, Oxnard, CA, noted: "The use of recyclable containers is an important part of our business; we strive to be good environmental stewards, while at the same time ensuring quality and food safety and hope to lead the industry toward using more sustainable packaging solutions."

For Chad Smith of Earthbound Farms, Bautista, CA, wax-free solutions also offer flexibility in the choice of packaging. "We ship broccoli to retailers across the country, and the product not only arrives fresh and appealing to consumers, but the boxes are recyclable along with other OCC," he said.

Less fiber doesn't mean less strength.

Temple-Inland's innovative box designs such as the Push End features three combined internal reinforcing packages, strength ideal for produce. The Push End offers superior stacking strength compared to conventional one piece boxes.



Premier treatment where it matters.

Ultimately, getting attention in-store is critical. Temple-Inland's Premier Whitetop™ boasts the brightest of all industry whitetops and is an ideal choice for green marketing efforts – and providing higher scorecard values.

Ag packaging
Bulk packaging
Consumer packaging
Specialty packaging
Point-of-sale

www.templeinland.com

"We champion the benefits of improved sustainability," said Grossman, "so we're expanding the development of a growing family of wax-alternative products that started with our successful protein and beef applications. In addition to our wax replacement efforts, we're working with new design innovations that allow us to reduce fiber content of packaging while improving performance – innovation directly linked to good sustainability practice." It's called the "Flush End" and is ideal for produce needing extra protection in a display or retail-ready format.

"Let's not lose sight of the ultimate customer – the shopper," Grossman added, "When the blink of an eye can make the difference between buying an item or ignoring it, the challenge is to instantly grab that shopper's attention. We've developed a more environmentally friendly white paper – Premier Whitetop™ – which dramatically improves brand awareness while providing enhanced graphic appeal.

Corrugated producers are working together through the Fibre Box Association to improve sustainability efforts. Some of these opportunities may require changes to box styles, sizes, and pack counts. Temple-Inland will continue its efforts to replace wax, while bringing new design styles such as the Flush End Tray coupled with environmentally friendlier substrates like Premier Whitetop™ to help maximize produce sales.

"The alignment is working well," Grossman noted. "Sustainability certainly is the right direction." ■

To learn more about Temple-Inland's latest efforts related to sustainability, please contact Jeff Grossman, Manager, ShowCase Group, at 956.648.8003.



As packaging experts, Temple-Inland develops sustainable corrugated solutions that safely deliver the vibrant tastes of fresh produce from the fields to the retail aisles. In colorful display-ready shippers that get noticed. Because "ummm" should be available everywhere, all year long...



A singular goal. We strive to be the industry leader in environmental stewardship. From the way we manufacture the corrugated board for our corrugated products to how we run our mills and sheet plants to our own recovery, reuse and recycling programs, we have always looked for ways to conserve and protect the environment for future generations. We believe we

Temple-Inland
Corrugated Packaging



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Our industry is a leader in the use of renewable biofuels, with an average of 65 percent of our energy coming from this sustainable source. And in 2009, 81.2 percent of all corrugated containers produced in the U.S. were reclaimed for recycling. These are just two of the many reasons that make corrugated packaging the sustainable, responsible choice.

The **Corrugated Packaging Alliance** (www.corrugated.org) is a corrugated industry initiative jointly sponsored by the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), the Association of Independent Corrugated Converters (AICC) and the Fibre Box Association (FBA).

www.corrugated.org

New Market Paves Way For New Growth In Philadelphia



A new state-of-the art facility returns Philadelphia to a leadership role in wholesale markets. **BY JODEAN ROBBINS**

For years, the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market merchants have fought the physical structure of the old market in order to move their business forward. Now, their building will finally be their ally as they move into a brand new, state-of-the art facility this winter and take on their new name: the Philadelphia

Wholesale Produce Market (PWPM). "This new facility enables us to be a part of the future," says Tom Kovacevich, general manager of T.M. Kovacevich - Philadelphia Inc. "Without the advancement we would become obsolete. With this new, state-of-the-art facility we become an integral hub in the future of the produce business."

The move into a new building, which is planned for January, 2011, will put Philadelphia back in the leadership position it had 50 years ago when the city's current facility was opened and touted to be leading edge. "We are absolutely looking forward to getting into the new market," says Mark Levin, CEO of M. Levin & Co. Inc. "We need to go back to being the leading facility we were when the current market was built."

"I really believe this will be a world destination site for anyone in produce," says Mike Maxwell, president of Procacci Brothers Sales

Corp. "Our new facility is the first of its kind. We're investing and looking toward the next 50 years and this market will take us there. We faced the challenge of making a serious commitment to the long haul, and we accomplished it!"

The new market certainly demonstrates the commitment of the Philly merchants to moving their business, and that of their customers, into the future. "The cost of operating and owning this new market is 300 percent more than our current one," states Joe Procacci, CEO of Procacci Brothers. "This demonstrates

that we're looking at moving forward and willing to make that commitment financially."

"We're investing more than \$200 million and a lot of time and energy into building Philly's produce future and that of our region," reports Richard Nardella, CEO and chief financial officer of Nardella Inc. "It will be the No. 1 showplace for produce in the world. We really need this new facility to move our business into the future."

"The new market is impressive," says John W. Waleski, president of John W. Waleski Produce Inc. "Buyers and especially chains

Philadelphia Retail Market Share Information

COMPANY/HEADQUARTERS	TRADE NAMES	TOTAL Area Stores	CURRENT Market Share
Giant Food Stores LLC: CARLISLE, PA	FoodSource; Giant Food Store; Martin's	50	15.5
SUPERVALU Inc.: EDEN PRAIRIE, MN	Acme Market; Save-A-Lot	116	14.2
Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co. Inc.: MONTVALE, NJ	Food Basics USA; Pathmark; Pathmark S; Super Fresh	57	11.3
Safeway Inc.: PLEASANTON, CA	Genuardi's Family Market; Safeway	38	8.5
Walmart Stores Inc.: BENTONVILLE, AR	Walmart Supercenter	12	5.3
BJ's Wholesale Club Inc.: NATICK, MA	BJ's Wholesale Club	14	5.3
Brown's Super Stores Inc.: BELLMAWR, NJ	ShopRite	11	3.7
ShopRite Supermarkets Inc.: FLORIDA, NY	ShopRite	10	3.6
Zallie Supermarkets Inc.: CLEMENTON, NJ	ShopRite	8	3.6
Costco Wholesale Corp.: ISSAQUAH, WA	Costco Wholesale	4	3.4
Sam's Club: BENTONVILLE, AR	Sam's Club	7	3.2
Wegmans Food Markets Inc.: ROCHESTER, NY	Wegmans	5	3.0
Whole Foods Market Inc.: AUSTIN, TX	Whole Foods Market	7	1.9
Supermarkets of Cherry Hill Inc.: CHERRY HILL, NJ	ShopRite	5	1.6
Trader Joe's Co.: MONROVIA, CA	Trader Joe's	8	1.4
Redner's Markets Inc.: READING, PA	Redner's Warehouse Market	10	1.4
Aldi Inc.: BATAVIA, IL	Aldi	22	1.3
Giant Food LLC: LANDOVER, MD	Giant Food	3	1.0
The Fresh Grocer: DREXEL HILL, PA	Fresh Grocer; Great Valu	9	1.0
Saker ShopRites Inc.: FREEHOLD, NJ	ShopRite	2	0.9
Delaware Supermarket Inc.: WILMINGTON, DE	ShopRite First State Plaza; ShopRite of Brandywine Commons; ShopRite of Newark; ShopRite of Wilmington	4	0.6
Eickhoff Supermarkets: DELRAN, NJ	ShopRite of Ark Road; ShopRite of Cinnaminson; ShopRite of Delran; ShopRite of Hainesport; ShopRite of Willingboro	5	0.6
Weis Markets Inc.: SUNBURY, PA	Weis Market	4	0.6
Grand Supper Center: LYNDBURST, NJ	H Mart	4	0.5
Landis Supermarket Inc.: TELFORD, PA	Landis Supermarket	4	0.5
Holiday Supermarkets Inc.: PHILADELPHIA, PA	Holiday Market; Holiday Thriftway; Shop N' Bag	4	0.5
Food Lion LLC: SALISBURY, NC	Food Lion	5	0.5
Oak Ridge Markets: WARREN, MI	Oak Ridge Market	4	0.6
Saturn Food Center: DEARBORN HEIGHTS, MI	Hartheart Land Marketplace; Sack & Save; Saturn Food Center; Saturn Super Foods	5	0.6
Ivanhoe Inc.: LIVONIA, MI	Value Center Market	3	0.4
Shoppers Market: CENTER LINE, MI	Shoppers Market	3	0.4
Haug Corporation: MINNETONKA, MN	Cub Foods	2	0.8
J & L Enterprises Inc.: CHASKA, MN	Cooper's County Market; Cooper's SuperValu	3	0.6
Johannesson's Inc.: BEMIDJI, MN	Marketplace Foods	2	0.5
County Market: ANDOVER, MN	County Market	2	0.5
Radermacher Foods Inc.: JORDAN, MN	Cub Foods; Radermacher's Fresh Market	2	0.4
Other operations		329	5.0

Data courtesy of Chain Store Guide, Tampa, FL.

Where Old World Values...



*Mural by Kids of Ogontz Avenue Art Company, 2002.
As seen on the wall of Unit #60 at the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market*

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Reader Service # 95



Joe Procacci and Rita Neczypor,
Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.

should be very receptive to the cold chain and food safety benefits of the new market. We need customers to support the market and the commitment we've made."

John DiFelicianantonio, partner at Ryeco LLC, adds, "Change is always difficult, but we're working to make sure that our customers will be able to come in, achieve what they need to and benefit their business. At the end of the day, we're thinking about how to

help our customers make money."

Specifically Designed

The main advantage of the new building is that it was designed from the start to do exactly what the merchants on the market do. "We've chewed over the design for years to ensure it meets all of our current and future needs," explains John Vena, president of John

Overheard On The Market

After their first day of business on the new market, merchants hope their customers will appreciate all it has to offer. PRODUCE BUSINESS asked what they wanted to hear...

"We want our customers and merchants to walk away realizing that their future has just become clearer and brighter." — Tom Kovacevich, TM Kovacevich - Philadelphia Inc.

"We want customers to say that it's a great market for the safety and integrity of the product." — Joe Procacci, Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.

"We want our customers to walk away saying that the Philly merchants have made a significant contribution to the future of our industry." — Mike Maxwell, Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.

"We want our customers to think that this is THE place to buy and they need to be buying here." — Mark Levin, M. Levin & Co.

"On the first day, I'd like to hear customers saying in several different languages, 'I feel like I'm in produce paradise.'" — John Vena, John Vena Inc.

Vena Inc. "We've looked at all the issues from cold chain management to cleanliness and equipment. All the details were put together to make a building to do specifically what we do. It is built uniquely to fit our business."

The entire facility is enclosed and under controlled temperature and environment. "This facility is the first fully enclosed, fully refrigerated terminal market in the world," reports Dan Kane, assistant general manager for PWPM. "It's a real testament to the Philadelphia produce community to undertake and achieve this project, especially in this economic climate. The official project budget is \$218,500,000. It's a true public-private partnership between the state of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, the PWPM and O'Neill Properties Group."

The building is 668,000 square feet, with the first floor alone measuring 558,000 square feet. The balance on the second floor is for the stockholders and leased office space. "In addition to the main building, we have an 18,000 square foot recycling and waste management building about 100 feet away," reports Kane. "All the trash collection and sorting will be done here, so it will be a much nicer experience for customers and employees."

The building is on a 48-acre site in southwest Philadelphia, about five miles south of the existing produce market. In addition to the 48-acre main site, there is an additional 15-acre gated and fenced lot around the corner, which will be used for truck storage. The parking lot is capable of holding 1,200 vehicles and the extra storage lot can hold 118 tractor-trailers. "The new market is about five minutes away from the airport and conveniently located to I-95, I-76 and all major highways our customers and suppliers currently use," says Kane.

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Alex Dvor, ADM Produce



Tom Stefanopoulos,
Norm and Lou's Restaurant



Rick Feighery,
Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.



Mike Maxwell,
Procacci Brothers Sales Corp.



John Durante,
Nardella Inc.

The new market will house 26 merchants occupying 68 units. Each unit is approximately 4,200 square feet and offers design and technological advancements for the merchants. "The new market is a brand new, state-of-the-art, food safety-compliant facility," adds Anthony Stea, CEO of Stea Bros. Inc. "There is nothing like this in the country."

What's So High Tech?

So what makes the new PWPM so state-of-the-art? "The market will be the largest central refrigeration system in the United States, which allows us to reduce our operating costs

as well as maximize efficiency," explains Kane. "Common areas will be kept at a temperature of 50° and individual units will be able to manage a range of temperatures from 33 to 50°. The top of each of the 10 entrance ramps has motion-detection, high-speed insulated doors. The entrance and exit to each one of the vendors' coolers also have these doors. This is a first in the produce industry."

The quarter-mile long building has 224 sealed dock doors around the perimeter. "A high pressure air and insect curtain for each merchant allows us to also accommodate an open-top trailer that can't make a dock seal

yet still keep air and pests out of the building," reports Kane. "Dock levelers allow us to accommodate varying truck heights."

"We'll unload right into our refrigerated space about 10 to 20 feet from our coolers," states Ryeco's DiFelicianantonio. "We'll have more temperature variations and humidity control."

The market will have dual electric service, meaning an alternate power source as a backup in case the main power goes out. "It will also be a very safe, secure site," adds PWPM's Kane. "The interior and exterior will be protected by approximately 265 high-tech

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Rising Star: Tracie Levin

Philadelphia's own Tracy Levin of M. Levin & Co. Inc. was recognized as one of PRODUCE BUSINESS' 40-Under-Forty this past June. Levin is one of four women involved in the fourth generation of her family's wholesale fruit and vegetable business, which is entering its 105th year of business this year. She is known for having the drive to get to know the family business from the ground up and spent her first year at M. Levin learning how to ripen bananas. Since then, she has rotated in and out of all other facets of the business including buying, selling, administration, human resources, accounting and revamping the computer system. She currently is working in the crucial area of food safety, ensuring that the company, as well as

its suppliers, shippers and employees comply with safety standards.

"I think I'm the youngest to be recognized with this honor and I'm excited to be part of such an elite group," Levin states. "Since I've come into the business since college, I've met more and more young people in it. I'm looking forward to meeting the other honorees at the reception in October."

She is hopeful that her generation will have the chance to positively impact the industry. "I can bring a new and fresh perspective to the business and a link to technology," she explains. "I'm looking forward to using new ideas combined with the base of what we've always done well to even better serve our existing and new customers." **pb**

security cameras monitoring the site and building 24/7."

"The new technology will give us an advantage in efficiency," says John Black, a sales associate with E.W. Kean Co. Inc. "Sealed loading docks and speed doors will all help maintain the integrity of the produce. And, we'll see efficiencies in the areas of

power and other shared services as well."

A covered loading zone will provide better space for customers with smaller vehicles. "Smaller vans and cars have a covered parking area where they can load product," says Chip Wiechec, owner of Hunter Bros. Inc. "This will make it more convenient for them as well as help them better handle

their purchases."

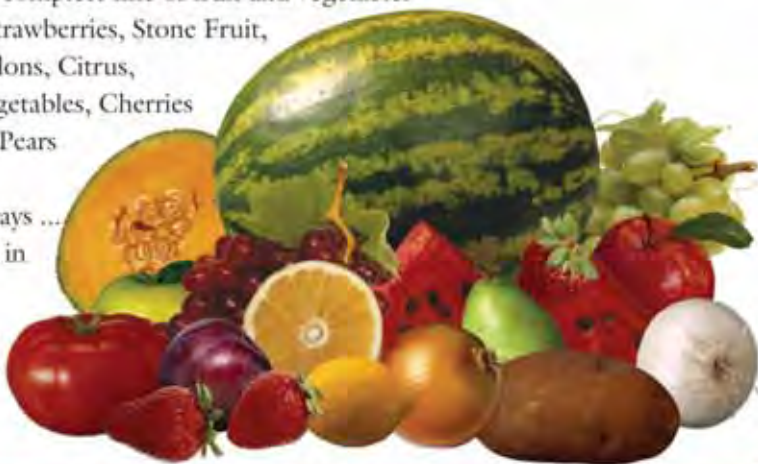
Various technological advances provide advantages in operation, work environment and handling of product. "The new market will have better and more natural lighting making it more conducive to looking at product," reports DiFelicianantonio.

"Operators will have less waste, which

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Reader Service # 92



Mark Semerjian,
Nardella Inc.



John Black,
E.W. Kean Co. Inc.

helps bring cost down," adds Wiechec. "There should be less abuse of produce due to smoother surfaces for equipment and the elimination of docking plates. This will also decrease the cost of wear and tear on the equipment."

Expanding Business

The new facility will allow the merchants to better serve customers and to expand their business. "There is so much more you can do in this new facility beyond just the normal terminal market sales," says George Manos, president of T.M. Kovacevich - Philadelphia Inc. "The advantages of this new facility will benefit our customers and suppliers alike."

"This market will enable us to expand," adds Levin of M. Levin & Co. "It gives us more space and opportunity to increase our business. We can push our service because our new capacity will allow us to sell more. We hope to bring on business that we previ-

ously would not be able to take due to prior limitations."

The new space will also facilitate new services. "The new market will allow us to do new things we can't do right now," agrees Wiechec. "Things like re-packing, value-adding, and even forward distribution."

"With the improved facility, we are planning and have already started to move into new services we can offer our shippers," reports Vena of John Vena Inc. "We'll have a lot more flexibility. We think we can be more efficient, and handle more items and more volume."

All Invited

The Philadelphia merchants are encouraging everyone to check out the new market once it opens. "If you are in the produce business, this building will make you smile," states Kovacevich of T.M. Kovacevich. "We are so excited to be able to take this big step; imagine the possibilities."

"Everybody is welcome," concurs Rick Milavsky, vice president at Frank Leone. "I don't care if it's large supermarkets or small co-ops. Everybody should feel very comfortable in this new facility."



Marty Roth,
Coosemans Philadelphia Inc.



Chip Wiechec,
Hunter Bros. Inc.

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Organic Opportunity

The new market will facilitate growth in many different areas, but will especially open the way for increasing organic sales. "Traditionally, organics on a terminal market have been difficult," says Rick Feighery, director of organic sales for Procacci Brothers Sales Corp. "The temperature and weather control of the new facility will help us display better since organics are more sensitive to these areas."

The enhanced customer base of the new market should spell even greater success in organics as well. "The new market should attract customers that may have more interest

in organic items," states Feighery. "We have some organic product on the market now and we're seeing increasing interest in people shopping for organic there. It used to be we'd get a request weekly, now it's daily."

The organic market in Philadelphia has evolved over the years. "When we first began it was all packaged," reports Feighery. "When we started, it was primarily to supplement our retail partners' programs, but we quickly found a need to be a full-service provider and a need to provide bulk items. We're looking forward to seeing where the new market facility takes the future of organics in Philly."

pb



Merchants expect to see the return of some customers and attraction of new ones. "Chain stores and foodservice distributors should be looking at this new facility," says Marty Roth, secretary/treasurer for Coosemans Philadelphia Inc. "They at least will want to get their 'shorts' here. The benefits the new market will offer in terms of quality, food safety and value is something they won't want to overlook."

"We foresee the opportunity to tell our story to new customers, maybe ones who left us and ones who could never consider us," says Vena. "This facility makes us even more attractive to many customers, including food service, right off the bat."

Michael Franzone, president of First Choice Food Distributors, a buyer on the market, explains, "The new market will make it

even more attractive for small chains and independent stores to shop there, whether directly or through a broker. There are just so many benefits and efficiencies to buying on a market. I think you'll see more supermarkets returning to shop the new market because they want to cut their shrink."

Visitors to The New York Produce Show and Conference, which takes place November

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Reader Service # 85



Norm & Lou's: Transformation Of A Tradition

As the Philadelphia merchants and customers enjoy their new environment to do business, they may be surprised to find the new and improved Norm & Lou's restaurant, which will also be in the new market. "In the new place I've set out to accomplish something we just couldn't do in our current facility," says Tom Stefanopoulos, owner of Norm & Lou's. "I want to offer a better, more convenient and more fresh-focused dining experience."

The new restaurant will seat 118 people, and will encompass a variety of dining options and cuisine. "I'm taking the best of what we're doing here now and adding to it to end up with a fantastic new restaurant concept," says Stefanopoulos. "We'll have our traditional café along with the more ethnic items of our second location as a base, and then I'm adding on a few new concepts."

Stefanopoulos will be bringing on a chef from a local Italian eatery who will offer new items such as pasta dishes and Ciabatta sandwiches. He is also hiring a manager from one of the local Salad Works to help incorporate more fresh produce. "We'll end up with essentially four different types of cuisine," he explains. "I will be able to provide catering services as well."

The new space will offer a sit down area, a take-out with counter seating, and a grab-n-go section. "We really want to show off the fresh produce aspect of our food and having the space now allows us to do it," Stefanopoulos states. "I'm really excited, even though it's difficult because of the increased costs of the new operation. But, you have to do what you have to do in order to grow and continue to serve your customers."

9-11 at the Hilton Hotel in New York, NY, may well be among the first to have a look at the new facility during a bus tour following the show. "We're working to promote the market and encourage everyone to come take a look," says Vena.

"They say 'if you build it, they will come' and that's what we're hoping for," states Gary Goldblatt, president at G & G Produce Inc. "We expect to see many who appreciate the

benefits of a new, state-of-the-art facility."

More Efficient Environment

The layout and design of the new market

will make for more efficient business. "Our customers will get faster deliveries," says Kovacevich. "Our new facility has been



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Leonard Klinghoffer, Fadi Abi-Khattar and Johnny Abi-Khattar,
Klinghoffer Brothers Inc.

designed to efficiently pick orders; it was fun to design a building that will make us better, stronger and faster."

"It should be easier for us to serve our cus-

tomers," says Fred Penza, vice president of Pinto Bros. Inc. "We can better physically stage and load the product."

Levin of M. Levin says, "We should have

the opportunity to spend more time with customers because we'll be dealing less with logistical and physical issues."

The new market also offers a more com-

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Reader Service # 86



Along with its new facilities, the Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market has unveiled a new logo, which will be visible through several marketing initiatives currently underway by the PWPM, including trade advertising, tradeshows, events and a newly designed Web site that will launch in the fall prior to the planned move to the new space in January, 2011.

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comfortable shopping experience. "It will provide a comfortable environment for customers to shop and move around without worrying about rain, snow or jack traffic," states Kean's Black.

"It will be a more business-like atmosphere and more comfortable for customers to shop," says Procacci's Maxell. "It will be a show floor — the whole art of selling will be taken to a new level. The new market is like going to a mall. It will be very organized and customer friendly. Customers who may have been intimidated in the past by wholesale markets should feel very comfortable here."

"We want our customers to have an easier



Rob Reilly and Mark Reilly, Jr.,
Ryeco LLC



George Manos, Michele Carfango and Fran Carfango,
T.M. Kovacevich — Philadelphia Inc.

time getting in and out of the market and a more comfortable shopping experience," says Rich Clark, president of Jesse Pitt Co.

The dock space and covered parking area will benefit all customers. Todd Penza, salesman for Pinto Bros., explains, "With the increased door space it should be easier for customers to come and get a spot instead of waiting or driving around. Smaller customers will have ample covered parking to shield their loading from the weather. It will also be nice for them to not be sandwiched between tractor trailers."

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Reader Service # 132



Todd Penza, Louis Penza, Fred Penza, Nicole Penza, Pete Penza, Alex Penza, Michael Lombardo and Buddy Lombardo, Pinto Bros.

"The new market will be a much more sales-driven environment with lots of different commodity options and a better ability to display products," explains Maxwell of Proccaci Brothers. "We want to have a vast selection of items and give customers a one-stop-shop."

"There is a lot more space to put out more samples," says Coosemans' Roth. "Our current space wasn't built with all the stuff we currently handle in mind. For example, right now,

I just don't have the space to display Belgian endive. At the new facility, I'll be able to put out a lot more."

Customers should see an increase and diversity in the offering. "I'll be bringing in different items that I can't handle in our current space," says Stea of Stea Bros. Inc.

Better space for storage and other services is another benefit. "We'll have a bigger operation and be able to handle more product,"

says Milavsky of Frank Leone. "Everything will be more easily laid out."

"The new unit will help me be more efficient and utilize the entire space," states Clark of Jesse Pitt. "Currently, I have a lot of space that just isn't feasible for me to utilize. In the new place, I will be able to maximize it."

"We'll have more room to stage and set the product up for customers," says Ryeco's DiFelicantonio. "There are just so many advances

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Reader Service # 122



John and Karen Waleski and Neil Markovic,
John W. Waleski Produce Inc.

the new facility will allow us to take advantage of."

Improved Product Integrity

One of the biggest benefits of the new market is the cold chain integrity. "The enclosed, temperature controlled environment will better maintain the product year-round," says Procacci Brothers' Procacci. "The new market will provide benefits in quality, food safety and convenience for everyone."

"The new market will be better for the product," agrees Fadi Abi-Khattar, vice-presi-

dent and treasurer of Klinghoffer Bros. Inc. "It's a better environment in many ways."

"It will be better for the product because the cold chain won't be broken," states Jimmy Storey, president of Quaker City Produce Co. and president of the PWPM Board of Directors. "Product won't be out in the elements subject to excessive heat or cold. The new facility should help the shelf-life of the product immensely."

"We're going to be able to treat our products much better by controlling the environment and maintaining the cold chain," says



Ted Kramedas, wholesale buyer on the Market and
Rick Milavsky of B.R.S. Produce Co.



Kyle Coombs and Jimmy Storey,
Quaker City Produce Co.

Hunter Bros.' Wiechec. "Customers should see even better shelf-life on products."

"It will be better for the shippers," states Nardella of Nardella Inc. "It will allow us easier handling of their product and to display it at the proper temperature."

Food Safety Benefits

The most touted aspect of the new market is with respect to its food safety implications. "With what's happening at the FDA and USDA in the food safety and traceability arena, any market in the country would be hard pressed to comply," says Kovacevich's Manos. "This new market will give us a chance to comply in these areas and enhance our partnerships with our customers."

"The food safety implications of having a brand new building are enormous," agrees Maxwell of Procacci Brothers. "Traceability can be built into the new systems."

Merchants expect to see increased business

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A background image showing the Philadelphia skyline with several skyscrapers. In the foreground, there is a collage of various fruits including oranges, tomatoes, grapes, and apples.

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our smaller customers that may not have their own sophisticated food safety plans can rest easier knowing we're doing our best to provide food safety."

Cautious Enthusiasm

The merchants are well underway in planning for the move. "Excitement is building among our staff and we're preparing to face the challenge the new market will present," says Vena of John Vena Inc. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to redo our business, to sweep away our old systems and implement new ones that will help us all to improve our business."

"We're both excited and scared," reports Pinto's Penza. "It's a whole new way of doing business. As always, change brings challenge

but also opportunity."

The excitement and apprehension mirror a similar move 50 years ago. "My dad was on Dock Street when they made the move here," relates Stea. "Back then, many people were afraid to come here, but you just have to move forward."

The moving is expected to be quick and without delay to business, probably on a Friday to Sunday so merchants can be ready for business come Monday. "We move produce from California to Philadelphia every day so why wouldn't we be able to move ourselves a few miles?" queries Procacci. "This will be a big move and an even bigger celebration!"

"We can't wait to go," says Ryeco's DiFelicantonio. "It's going to be a great place to work."

pb

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Reader Service # 88

from some customers due to the food safety benefits. "We hope to gain extra trade to the market because of the food safety benefits," says Storey. "We'll be in a more food-safe facility and be able to focus on specific food safety programs that customers need."

Adds Stea of Stea Bros., "The new market facility will provide a base for us to meet any food safety requirements our customers have."

Specifically, larger retail and foodservice distributors and chains will be able to consider the PWPM. "The food safety aspect will put us back in the running with big wholesalers, foodservice distributors and other customers who have specific food safety considerations," explains Nardella.

"A supermarket with certain food safety requirements will now know that they can meet those at this new market," reports Manos of T.M. Kovacevich. "Additionally,



Photo courtesy of Jason Varney

bibou [BYOB]

Personal focus with personally selected ingredients – more than 50 percent of the menu incorporates produce. **BY JODEAN ROBBINS**

For an intimate French dining experience normally gained only through befriending a French chef, bibou BYOB is the equivalent of having such a friend. This softly appointed, cozy 32-seat restaurant boasts world-class French cooking while making you feel like you're in the dining room of friends. "People say they feel like they're eating at our house," says Charlotte Calmels, co-owner and wife of chef and owner Pierre Calmels.

Bibou is meant to help people connect with their food while providing a personal touch often lost in today's dining experience. "We want to provide an honest dining experience that is all about the food," says Pierre. "In return, our customers feel they can be completely honest with me about what works and what doesn't."

With revenues of around \$500,000 a year and a waiting crowd every night, this husband and wife team have certainly hit a nerve with their customers. The menu is kept very tight to allow for optimizing use of the freshest available ingredients and Pierre does his own baking and butchering.

French born and trained, Pierre Calmels' first U.S. job was in the 1990s at Daniel in New York. He relocated to Switzerland, where he met Charlotte working at the same hotel. In August, 2001, he returned to the United States and asked her to follow him. She has worked at such Philly icons as Brasserie Perrier, the Restaurant School, Patou and Bistro St. Tropez.

Before opening bibou, Pierre spent five years as executive chef for Le Bec Fin following three years there as sous chef.

The restaurant appeals to a wide mix of demographics although customer groups tend to correspond to particular hours. "We'll get an older crowd earlier in the evening," says Charlotte. "Then the 40-somethings, then the business crowd, then the younger crowd late in the evening. We also get a lot of customers in the foodservice business. Our customers come from all over the city and the surrounding suburbs. We have a pretty wide appeal."



The Calmels help people connect with food by using fresh produce from the Philly market and Farm Art.



Personal Choice

Pierre is adamant about the need to personally peruse and select his ingredients. He walks the Philly market (PWPM) about twice a week and goes to Farm Art, a local distributor, every day. When sourcing produce items, Pierre looks for fresh and quality first, even before seasonality. "If the quality is good, then why shouldn't I use the best ingredient I can find that day?" he queries. "If something does not look good, it's easy for me to make substitutions. It's all about having control over my ingredients."

He makes an effort to discover great products and recently added fresh hearts of palm flown in from Hawaii as an ingredient. "I like to search out different products," he says. "I take my time at the Philly market to really look at all the different things available. It helps inspire my creativity, and it's fun."

He was once criticized by a well-known Philadelphia food critic for putting Clementines on the menu in August. Charlotte explains, "Although the critic admitted the dish was wonderful, he just couldn't get over having Clementines in August, telling us, 'It's not the season for Clementines.'"

More than 50 percent of the menu incorporates produce and not surprisingly, Pierre places great emphasis on fresh fruits and vegetables. "Produce gives the flavor, texture and color of the dish, and makes for a healthful component," he says. "It's as important as the protein on the plate. Produce is also very versatile. I really like to play with produce and use different techniques."

One of his most unique uses of produce was a pumpkin consommé, made from 100 percent pumpkin, though customers were convinced it had some type of protein broth

"Produce gives the flavor, texture and color of the dish, and makes for a healthful component. It's as important as the protein on the plate. Produce is also very versatile. I really like to play with produce and use different techniques."

— Pierre Calmels

because of the flavor and texture. "It's great to take an item and turn it into something notable," he states.

Surprises Everywhere

Bibou's menu is full of pleasant surprises, especially for produce lovers. Starters include a Chilled Green Olive Soup with Shredded Marinated Jicama — an unexpected yet delicious combination. Scottish smoked salmon is accompanied by roasted red bell pepper and goat cheese. A luscious *foie gras* is complemented by a sautéed brown fig and red wine duck *jus*.

For the main course, bibou excels at fish dishes, where Pierre continues to deliver unique produce combinations. An amazing seared Skate wing incorporates fresh Hawaiian hearts of palm, sea beans and saffron cau-

liflower florets. Poached black cod is served with fresh English peas, baby carrots and a lavender emulsion. Not to be upstaged, a flavorful Hanger steak with green peppercorn sauce is accompanied by sautéed potatoes and perfectly *al dente* green asparagus. Veal medallions were served with Pearl barley, radicchio and Chanterelle mushrooms.

Produce remains constant even in the dessert course. The *Fromage* (cheese) plate and the *Baba au Rhum*, a sponge cake soaked in rum and Chantilly, were served with a variety of fresh fruits. The freshest dessert of the day was a tantalizing peach tart.

The menu changes every week. "Each week I look at what's coming and what's good as far as available products," Pierre says. "Shopping the market helps with this. Often, I can see what's coming up that will be good for the next week. Just walking into the coolers of the merchants and seeing what's fresh gives me great inspiration for what I want to put on the menu."

pb

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Thomas Family Markets

Driving produce sales by offering value. **BY JODEAN ROBBINS**

Thomas Markets is the perfect example of a successful and growing independent retailer that has found its niche by offering customers quality and value in produce. Where other retailers are selling out, Thomas is moving in and offering a real benefit to the community. "Our goal is to drive our business through competitively priced, outstanding quality perishables," says Chris Evans, co-owner of Thomas Markets. "Our primary focus has always been on produce and meat. This is our niche and we find it is a big weakness of the larger box and chain stores."

Beginning in 1997 with one small 5,000 square-foot store in Larkesville, PA, the retailer quickly progressed to opening a full-service 16,000 square-foot supermarket in 1998, in Shavertown, PA. Six months later, the company opened Hazleton and in March, 2009, the Dallas store opened. With another store in Tunkhannock, PA, Thomas Family Markets now operates a total of five stores in northeastern Pennsylvania and continues to look for future opportunities.

Family-owned and independent, they are part of the Foodtown retail co-op, out of Calteret, NJ, which offers marketing support to its

62-and-growing members. **PRODUCE BUSINESS** visited Thomas Family Markets Super Foodtown located in Dallas, PA, a 43,000 square-foot, full-service supermarket, which includes on-site chefs preparing sushi, pizza, a hot foods buffet, a fresh salad bar, an olive bar, sub shop, and much more as well as a super beer store located inside the store.

While Thomas Family Markets customers range in age and income, the Dallas store demographic consists of primarily older Americans focused on healthful eating. Thomas Markets has seen some changes in other locations, for example, a growing Latino community in its Hazleton store. The store also has many college students shopping, and has noticed an increase in their purchases as well.

According to Evans, everything the store does is focused on providing customers with





Elmer Blackwell (left), district supervisor, and Chris Evans, co-owner, work together to be sure their customers have access to the freshest local produce in the Philadelphia area.

value and driving sales. “We operate on an EDLP (every day low price) in perishables and we look at produce as driving our sales,” he says. “We’re operating at a much lower percent gross profit in our core departments than conventional supermarkets do because we pass those savings on to our customers.”

The management team at Thomas prides itself on looking for ways to differentiate its business and serve their customers. “It means we’re always challenging the status quo,” asserts Evans. “We like to be different. We’re never complacent.”

Value In Perishables

From the first step into the store and the produce department, there is no doubt about the company’s focus on and commitment to produce. An open, bright, clean, and well-organized 2,500 square-foot department exudes fresh, fresh, fresh. “The produce department is absolutely the most important part of our business because it’s what determines our customers’ perception of fresh,” says Evans. “Produce determines the store’s image. We stress with our employees the importance of produce to our overall store and success.”

Produce contributes around 13 to 15 percent of overall sales in the store, a number

that continues to grow. The Dallas store handles about 500 different perishable SKUs in produce. Nine immaculate movable tables featuring the best values of the day are right up front, greeting customers as they enter the department. All products are clearly visible and the department is consumer-friendly and easy to maneuver. The open space, wide aisles and large displays entice customers to spend time exploring each item.

On the value-added side, the department includes about 12 linear feet of refrigerated bagged salads and add-ons. There is about 19 linear feet of refrigerated fresh-cut including cut fruit, veggie trays, dips and fresh juices. Thomas is on the cusp of growing the organic

category. “We see the potential,” says Evans. “It’s something the entire population is moving toward, but often reluctant to pay for.”

Layout of the department is constantly changing. “We change at least once, sometimes twice a week, depending on the season and buying deals,” explains Evans. “Our nine movable tables are changed at least every week to feature different items. If you don’t change things around then produce becomes like grocery and not as exciting to shop.”

Sourcing The Deals

Evans and district supervisor, Elmer Blackwell, used to make the trek to physically shop the Philadelphia market, as well as the Lancaster auction when they were operating just one store. Now, as they’re forced to focus on operational and marketing issues for five different locations, they rely on experienced partners to help in their sourcing.

Blackwell tirelessly works the phones to remain linked in to a market that changes daily. Thomas currently uses Procacci Brothers Corp., based at the PWPM, as its main distributor, as well as a local buying house that also sources from the Philly market. “The Philly market is great,” says Evans. “You can find fantastic deals there, which really allow you to bring value to your customers.”

Locally grown is an increasing area of

“The produce department is absolutely the most important part of our business because it’s what determines our customers’ perception of fresh. Produce determines the store’s image. We stress with our employees the importance of produce to our overall store and success.”

— Chris Evans

interest for customers, and the company is looking to do more local sourcing as well, although volume and logistics can be prohibitive. “We promote the PA Proud items in our ads,” reports Evans. “We want to support the local farms as much as we can.”

All value-added is done in-store and includes vegetable kabobs, a variety of cut fruit and stir-fry mixes. The store also hand-cuts fruit and vegetable platters to order.

The retailer’s focus on perishables and sourcing great value deals translates into significant volume. “The Dallas store pulls around two trailer loads of produce a week,” reports Evans. “All our stores together average about three truckloads a day.”



Aggressive Promotion

Evans credits the company's aggressive promotions as one of the main reasons it has come so far. "We run three separate ads each week in three marketing areas," he reveals. "While a normal supermarket may have 15 to 20 produce items on ad, we run 30 to 40 items per week. We also focus on advertising the items customers want every day — their core items."

Thomas' manages a fine balancing act between placing ads and its purchase deals. "We buy on Monday and we have it in the newspaper on Tuesday," Evans says. "We're buying on market breaks and we have flexibility to adjust our ads as necessary. That gives us great leverage in putting out the best deals to our customers."

Great promotions are backed by great customer service, as Thomas' puts emphasis on in-store training. "You have to know what you're selling, so training employees is crucial," says Evans. "Customers will ask questions, which provide us with an opportunity to give them a level of service that they will not find in a chain store. We look at it as empowering our employees to make a difference."

Thomas does continuous on-site training with the department managers and floor

"You have to know what you're selling, so training employees is crucial. Customers will ask questions, which provide us with an opportunity to give them a level of service that they will not find in a chain store. We look at it as empowering our employees to make a difference."

— Chris Evans

employees. "We are constantly teaching, coaching and training," states Evans. All store managers are specifically trained in meat and produce as well. In the event of a shortage of staff, they are expected to be able to fulfill the duties of any of the positions in the perishable

departments. "Our goal is always keep the customer in mind," reports Evans. "If there's a broken cog in the wheel, we don't want the customer to suffer."

Thomas' Family Markets also places great emphasis on involvement with the community. "We sponsor two charity golf tournaments every year, as well as a chicken barbecue for the volunteer fire companies in each town," Evans explains. "Each store manager is tasked with coming up with something to get the store involved with the community." **pb**

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Collotti & Sons	I-7 to I-8	215-389-3335	215-755-9616	Paul Giordano & Sons, Inc.	D-7 to D-9	215-755-7900	215-755-7160
Coosemans Philadelphia	D-5 to D-6	215-334-3634	215-334-3636	Pinto Brothers, Inc.	G-7 to G-9	215-336-3015	215-336-5422
E.W. Kean Co.	D-1	215-336-2321	215-336-1596	Procacci Brothers/ Garden State Farms	I-4 to I-6	215-336-4616	215-339-0974
E.W. Kean Co.	G-1 to G-2	215-336-2321	215-336-1596	PWPM	B-4	215-336-3003	215-336-5542
G&G Produce, Inc.	F-7 to F-8	215-468-0125	215-336-9925	Quaker City Produce Co.	B-1 to B-3	215-467-5000	215-336-4416
G.K. Produce	B-6	215-336-3551	215-336-3544	Ryeco, LLC.	C-3 to C-7	215-551-8883	215-551-9036
Hunter Brothers, Inc.	H-8 to H-9	215-336-4343	215-336-4340	Stea Brothers, Inc.	B-7 to B-8	215-336-2170	215-336-2194
Jesse Pitt Company	I-9	215-336-5325	215-389-1490	T.M. Kovacevich-Phila., Inc.	A-1 to A-6	215-463-0100	215-463-7758
John Vena, Inc.	F-1 to F-5	215-336-0766	215-336-2812	Thomas Colace Co.	A-7 to A-9	856-384-4980	215-467-0414
John W. Waleski Produce, Inc.	F-9	215-336-1570	215-336-2230	USDA Inspection Service	C-1 to C-2	215-336-0845	215-336-2051
Kaleck Brothers, Inc.	B-5	215-336-3027	215-551-1083	Vassallo, Inc.	F-6	215-336-1984	215-336-7955
Klayman Produce, Inc.	H-6 to H-7	215-468-1400	215-468-0824	Wick & Brother, Inc.	B-4	215-336-2252	215-336-2255
Klinghoffer Bros.	C-8 to C-9	215-336-3800	215-336-5234				
M. Levin & Company, Inc.	H-2 to H-5	215-336-2900	215-755-6757				

Reader Service # 51



Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market

All the best, all right here.



With over **700,000 square feet** of merchant display units, cooling facilities and loading areas, the possibilities are endless at the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market opening soon.

Take a tour
November 11
during the
NY Produce Show

Quality.

Best in class cold chain management technology plus 50 years of experience equals premium quality products.

Variety.

From apples to zucchini, conventional to organic and local to import, we've got you covered.

Service.

Improved efficiencies and market logistics translates to an improved buying experience at the market.

Visit America's newest wholesale produce market!

November 11, 2010 | 8:00 a.m.
NY Produce Show Bus Tour

Attendees of the inaugural New York Produce Show are invited to take a guided tour of the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market.

Merchants and fresh produce experts will be available to answer your questions.

Reader Service # 119

Our New Location: 6700 Essington Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19153

www.prpm.org

AISLE *by* AISLE

Booth Review

Fresh Summit International Convention & Exposition
October 15 - 18, 2010
Orange County Convention Center
Orlando, Florida USA



SPONSORS



Booth #671



Booth #1442, 1443



Booth #4443



Booth # 1129

A young boy wearing a white straw hat and blue overalls is seen from behind, pushing a red wheelbarrow. The wheelbarrow is filled with a single, enormous, ripe red strawberry with green leaves. The boy is walking on a grassy field with a blurred background of green foliage.

Sunrise
Growers

Booth # 1129

STRAWBERRIES
are really big right now.

PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 000

Booth #27, #4465

REDLINE SOLUTIONS Santa Clara, CA

RedLine provides whole-chain traceability solutions for growers, packers and shippers. With more than a decade of fresh produce experience, RedLine implements practical solutions including the hardware, software and services you need to become PTI compliant. We deliver traceability while driving productivity and providing visibility to your operations.



AISLE 200

Booth #231 CRUNCH PAK Cashmere, WA

Crunch Pak®, the industry leader in fresh sliced apples, is celebrating a decade of innovation this year. Visit our booth for a taste of Crunch Pak's family of brands including Disney Garden, BK Apple Fries® and Crunch Pak® Organics. See what's next as our new Snackers line grows beyond apples.



Booth #329

GOURMET GARDEN Folsom, CA

The makers of Gourmet Garden Herb & Spice Blends are proud to announce our products are now made from organically grown herbs certified to USDA standards. Check out our fresh new packaging to go along with this exciting change. We still have the same great flavor and versatility, just added value.



Booth #451

PROGRESSIVE PRODUCE Los Angeles, CA

An industry leader in packaging, food safety, traceability and innovation, Progressive's appealing packaging and outstanding customer service makes it a dynamic category partner in potatoes, onions, sweet onions, asparagus, chiles, Key limes, baby lemons, limes, beans and rice, as well as organic potatoes and onions.



AISLE 500

Booth #543 GIORGIO FRESH CO. Blandon, PA

Stop by our booth at PMA to sample delectable mushroom hors d'oeuvres, accompanied by insights into our approach to sustainability, food safety and quality management systems. Learn how our SQF (Safe Quality Food) and MGAP (Mushroom Good Agricultural Practices) certifications benefit our customers and their demanding consumers.



AISLE 100

Booth #135 WAYNE BAILEY SWEET POTATOES Chadbourn, NC

Our company is celebrating 75 years of service in the sweet potato industry. Come see how we are continuing to build on our past experiences while staying innovative.



Booth #242 SUNRIDGE FARMS Pajaro, CA

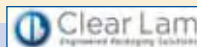
SunRidge Farms has been a leader in the organic and all-natural bulk food category for almost 30 years. Our product manufacturing capabilities include nut roasting, chocolate and yogurt panning and enrobing, trail and snack mixing, and granolas. We pack our products in bulk, colorful zip lock bags and I tubs.



Booth #351

CLEAR LAM PACKAGING INC. Elk Grove Village, IL

Clear Lam is a manufacturer of rigid and flexible packaging materials for perishable goods. Project EarthClear™ encompasses our commitment to environmentally friendly technologies. Three separate initiatives include: packaging made completely/partially from plant based raw materials — not oil; packaging made with post-consumer and post-industrial recycled content; and light-weighting technologies to reduce weight.



Booth #458

CAVENDISH PRODUCE Charlottetown, PEI, Canada

Russets, whites, reds, yellows, blues, fingerlings, organics...we have what you're looking for. Retail or foodservice, we bring you value through premium products and packaging.



Booth #546

NOVEL PRODUCTS INC. Washington, UT

Pomegranate fans are going to love this new invention. The 60 Second Pomegranate Deseeder will remove the seeds from a pomegranate quickly and with no mess. Just thump the pomegranate with a heavy utensil and watch the seeds pop right out.



Booth #138

MIATECH INC. Clackamas, OR

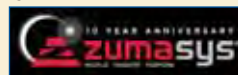
Miatech's innovative Bio-Turbo line for the post-harvest industry removes airborne contaminants, eliminates 99 percent of ethylene gas, creates a better overall environment for stored produce and cut floral products, and cuts down on waste and shrinkage. Miatech is pleased to announce that a smaller, lighter Bio-Turbo unit will soon be added to our current line.



Booth #265

ZUMASYS INC. Irvine, CA

Zumasys computing solutions are ideal for small to medium growers, packers and shippers that want to spend more time growing their business and less time managing their computers, applications and server infrastructure. You'll never need to worry about back-ups or server upgrades again.



Booth #371

EUROPEAN FLAVORS El Portal, FL

European Flavors will be exhibiting at the PMA for the third time. This program is partly funded by the European Union and aims to highlight the benefits of healthful eating habits by promoting a Mediterranean-style diet. This year, the companies exhibiting as part of the U.S. program will be: Made in Blu, Granfrutta Zani, Oranfrizer SRL and Alegria.



Booth #473

ASB GREENWORLD Valdosta, GA

For more than 30 years, ASB Greenworld has been a supplier to the floral industry. We are producers of peat moss and related mixes, including potting soils, mulch and bark items, with the addition of Schultz products. Our own peat bog is situated in New Brunswick, Canada, with locations in Mt. Elgin, Ontario, Valdosta, GA and Virginia.



Booth #553

SHENANDOAH GROWERS Harrisonburg, VA

Shenandoah Growers provides customers with a wide assortment of fresh herb products in clamshells and bunches, offering varieties that are conventionally grown and certified organic. Living organic herbs are grown year-round in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. New this year is the addition of the 1/4-oz. herb package.



Booth #146

OKE USA FRUIT CO. West Bridgewater, MA

Equal Exchange is changing the banana industry by providing high quality Organic and Fair Trade-certified bananas from small-scale farmers in Peru and Ecuador. Equal Exchange has challenged traditional trade models for over 20 years. Now we are offering consumers a different kind of banana.



Booth #318

PECO PALLET INC. Yonkers, NY

At Peco, we don't just lease pallets. We also work closely with manufacturers, distributors and depots throughout our extensive service network to find innovative ways to reduce costs and improve efficiency. Peco saves our customers the time, expense and hassle of managing pallet flows so they can focus on what they do best.



Booth #419

STEPAC USA Encinitas, CA

Reduce shrink, increase shelf-life and strengthen your brand with StePac's Xtend® Modified Atmosphere/Modified Humidity Packagings and Xsense™ cold chain monitoring system, which monitors temperature inside produce cartons and alerts in real time.



Booth #481

MAXCO SUPPLY INC. Parlier, CA

Maxco's innovative packaging solutions include the Microflute Tri-Wall box, which reduces box weight while increasing durability, and the LTS Green Container, an environmentally friendly product that was the first of its kind approved by the USDA for shipping table grapes overseas.



Booth #556

BLANC INDUSTRIES INC. Dover, NJ

Blanc Industries has recently purchased WP Sign Systems, located in Centralia, WA. This acquisition represents Blanc Industries' long-term commitment to superior customer service, quality and product innovation through industry consolidation and partnership.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #568

SAN MIGUEL PRODUCE Oxnard, CA

San Miguel Produce is a grower and processor of farm-fresh, ready-to-use American and Asian greens including: Cut 'n Clean Greens, conventional and organic, greens Seasoning and Jade (Asian greens) available year-round.



Booth #573

SUNNYRIDGE FARM Winter Haven, FL

SunnyRidge Farm Inc. is a grower, packer, shipper and marketer of conventional and organic blueberries, raspberries, blackberries and strawberries. SunnyRidge's standards of flexibility, reliability and innovation drive the company from all aspects of the business. You can count on SunnyRidge to deliver the latest and best berry varieties available.



Booth #586

UNCLE MATT'S ORGANIC Clermont, FL

Uncle Matt's Organic is a 4th generation, family-owned Florida citrus company that manages 1,000-plus acres. UMO includes 20 families growing, processing and selling fresh organic citrus and organic orange juice.



AISLE 600

Booth #643

INTEGRATED KNOWLEDGE GROUP INC. Bakersfield, CA

Prophet will be previewing its internationally acclaimed fresh produce supply chain software system "Pr2," which is being officially launched for the U.S. produce industry at this year's PMA.



Booth #652

NATURESEAL INC. Westport, CT

NatureSeal Inc. has expanded its line of shelf-life extenders for fresh-cut produce to include a new product line of sanitizing produce washes. NatureSeal FS, the first step in produce processing, is comprised of fruit acids and minerals that are offered as an alternative to conventional chlorine-based washes.



Booth #655

BEACH STREET FARMS Watsonville, CA

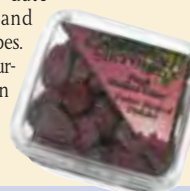
Beach Street Farms, a premier grower/shipper of conventional and organic berries, is committed to providing the highest quality berries available. Growing in the heart of the California strawberry-growing regions of northern and southern California, supplies are available almost year-round.



Booth #664

ATLAS PRODUCE Bakersfield, CA

Atlas Produce and Distribution Inc., is a grower and shipper of the popular Caramel Natural™ Medjool dates, date coconut rolls, date almond rolls and jumbo dried grapes. All items are natural and grown in California.



Booth #671

CLIFFORD PRODUCE Ruthven, ON, Canada

Clifford Produce is a premium hot house vegetable supplier to the North American market. Clifford offers year-round product availability of beef tomatoes, on-the-vine tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, seedless cucumbers, baby eggplant and other specialty products. Because we are consumer-focused and results-driven, we employ cutting-edge technology tools to meet cool chain and traceability requirements.



AISLE 700

Booth #742

PROCACCI BROTHERS Philadelphia, PA

Procacci Brothers is proud to provide your produce solutions. We have a full-line of premium produce including organics, tropicals, Mexican specialties, chestnuts and pre-made gift-baskets. We are also the exclusive distributors of proprietary varieties including Santa Sweets™ Grape Tomatoes and UglyRipe® Heirloom Type Tomatoes.



Booth #742

SANTA SWEETS Plant City, FL

Santa Sweets™ grows great tasting tomatoes, always of premium quality and consistent flavor. Exclusively grown by Santa Sweets from the first generation of the Santa variety seed, this Santa variety boasts higher sugar content and better flavor than other varieties. Our UglyRipe® Heirloom Tomatoes are as juicy as they are ugly — these tomatoes have a hearty flavor.



Booth #757

SPECIALTY POTATO ALLIANCE Mountainside, NJ

Specialty Potato Alliance will be cooking our brand new fingerling variety, the Merlot. The Merlot is a must-taste as it joins our two other proprietary varieties, the Rocky Rose and Red Rebel. We will also have our new multi-color plastic clip top bag on display. Growers will be on hand to offer samples of all new products.



See our ad on page 113

Booth #761

BEDFORD INDUSTRIES INC. Worthington, MN

Bedford Industries is a leader in the produce identification tagging markets. For years, we have offered high-quality produce packaging products such as: twist ties, Bib-Ties®, Snap-A-Tag® and ElastiTag® products. Our ElastiTag® can now also be manufactured in a large spool format for automation with the Strauss GUB Buncher.



Booth #781

MARIE'S Dallas, TX

Consumers will love Marie's Creamy Yogurt Dressing — all the delicious, homemade taste, but with half the fat and calories. If you want to sell more potatoes, try Marie's Potato Salad Dressing in three delicious flavors. Just prepare the potatoes, pour in the great taste of Marie's and serve.



Booth #801

SORMA USA LLC Exeter, CA

Sorma Group is recognized as a leading supplier of a vast range of machinery and material with a special focus on consumer packs, handling equipment for palletizing, strapping and handling of bins, state-of-the-art weighing technology, and netting and film for consumer packs. Sorma is committed to service and innovation.



Booth #825

TRIUNFO-MEX, INC. City Of Industry, CA

Jovy Fruit Rolls — a family favorite since 1975 — are available in 10 delicious flavors. Display ready, floor stackable twin packs (96 selling units) are available in five different flavors.



Booth #855

COLORFUL HARVEST Salinas, CA

Colorful Harvest grows premium fresh berries, and Heirloom-style produce, including strawberries, bushberries, melons, Rainbow Crunch Carrots™, orange, purple and green cauliflower, Ruby Jewel sweet red corn, violet broccoli, and seasonal purple-yellow or green Blue-Lake style beans.



Booth #861

LAKESIDE PRODUCE Leamington, ON, Canada

A family company since 1943, Lakeside Produce is featuring family-friendly alternatives to processed food. From Lunch Crunch Kits for children and adults, to organics, to a full range of specialties, your family will taste the love grown into all of our veggies.



Booth #922

GARDEN PROTEIN Richmond, BC

Gardein™ is a line of delicious plant-based foods slow-cooked to have the authentic taste and texture of premium lean meat by Garden Protein.



Booth #927

WILCOX FRESH Rexburg, ID

Wilcox Fresh is an Idaho-based grower/shipper with a national network of co-pack partners in potatoes, onions and sweet potatoes. Our company is committed to sustainability, food safety and social responsibility for our customers. We are also the leader in value-added potatoes with Potato Jazz.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #933

**CARLSON AIRFLO
MERCHANDISING**

Brooklyn Park, MN

Carlson AirFlo is proud to present new and innovative merchandising solutions for the presentation of produce to increase profits/substantial ROI.



Booth #971

**DUDA FARM FRESH
FOODS INC.**

Wellington, FL

The question that everyone will be asking during the 2010 PMA Fresh Summit Conference and Exposition is, "What's red?" Every year, our company invests in the development of proprietary products and flavor profiles to better meet the needs and wants of consumers. This year is no exception.



Booth #988

YUCATAN FOODS

Los Angeles, CA

Yucatan Foods proudly presents Cabo Fresh™, a lifestyle produce brand. Items include: Authentic, Mild-Organic and "NEW" Spicy Guacamole; Mild, Medium and new Chipotle Salsa; Bruschetta and Avo-Hummus™.



Booth #1009

**ROBOCOM SYSTEMS
INTERNATIONAL**

Farmingdale, NY

Robocom is a leading provider of supply chain software and services to the produce and food industry. Robocom's products include industry-specific warehouse management systems, voice picking modules, labor management system, complete lot and COOL (Country of Origin Label) traceability and support.



Booth #1029

ORCHID ISLAND JUICE

Fort Pierce, FL

Orchid Island Juice Company makes all-Florida, fresh-squeezed and gourmet Pasteurized citrus juices. Family-owned and operated, our gourmet pasteurized orange juice is voted the Best Tasting in America.



Booth #1067

JMB

San Francisco, CA

Since 1888, JMB has provided the highest quality produce. From our specialty asparagus to our other commodities including Ruby Fresh pomegranate arils, JMB consistently delivers the quality and service that have kept us in business for more than 120 years.



Booth #1067

WELL PICT BERRIES

Watsonville, CA

Now available from Well Pict: new proprietary strawberry and raspberry varieties that produce larger, more flavorful berries, and our redesigned strawberry clamshell, which helps reduce shipping costs.



Booth #1093

BLUE CREEK PRODUCE

Saint Charles, IL

Blue Creek Produce is a full-service grower and distributor of fresh produce. We grow year-round greenhouse tomatoes and peppers. We can arrange shipping from one pallet to a truckload quantity to most destinations.



AISLE 1100

Booth # 1129

SUNRISE GROWERS

Placentia, CA

Frozsun Foods is a top producer and marketer of high-quality, fresh strawberries year-round. In addition, we are the leader of the frozen fruit category and offer a full line of top quality products. We are fully vertically integrated from source to market, ensuring quality and safety throughout the supply chain. Please stop by and try our delicious smoothies.



See our ad on page 104

Booth #1153

PURFRESH, INC.

Fremont, CA

Purfresh is committed to promoting food safety throughout the supply chain with Purfresh Cold Storage, which preserves freshness during storage. We also offer Purfresh Wash, a disinfection wash solution, and Purfresh Transport, an active cargo protection system.



Booth #1159

WAYMOUTH FARMS

Minneapolis, MN

Waymouth Farms, maker of Good Sense® snacks, is offering many new and improved varieties of our conventional, all-natural and organic trail mixes, gourmet dried fruits, roasted nuts and seeds, chocolate- and yogurt-covered snacks, salad enhancements, kid's snacks and many seasonal items.



Booth #1165

DEL MONTE FOODS

Keller, TX

Del Monte Foods stands among this country's premier food companies. With a portfolio of consumer brands that have become American icons, we are committed to providing value and excellence in our products and services. Del Monte produce products deliver delicious, healthful, ready-to-enjoy refrigerated products specially packaged to seal in flavor.



Booth #1181

BOSKOVICH FARMS

Oxnard, CA

Boskovich Farms grows on more than 10,000 acres of land in California and Mexico, producing nearly 30 vegetables crops and strawberries year-round. Our processing division specializes in fresh-cut and value-added produce, giving us a diverse and comprehensive product line.



Booth #1219

YAKIMA FRESH

Park Ridge, IL

Our growing, packing and shipping experience reaches back to the early 1900s. Yakima Fresh was formed by three of the most successful Northwest growers: Roche, Stadelman and Yakima Fruit. Yakima Fresh is the source for all your Northwest apple, cherry and pear needs!



Booth #1249

PRODUCE PRO SOFTWARE

Woodridge, IL

Stop by and learn why Produce Pro is the industry leader in providing fully integrated, customizable software solutions, training and strategic business consulting to fresh produce businesses in North America.



Booth #1261

BLUE BOOK SERVICES

Carol Stream, IL

Blue Book Services has been the produce industry's premier credit and marketing information agency since 1901. We provide you with business tools and information to protect and grow your company. Stop by to learn about special show deals we have on membership and advertising.



Booth #1271

SAMBRAILO PACKAGING

Watsonville, CA

Come see the advantages of our innovative packaging products. We'll be featuring our freight-saving MIXIM Packaging System, the one-piece MIXIM Snap-Flap container and our new RunRite Family of high-speed packaging clamshells.



Booth #1281

ALLIANCE RUBBER CO.

Salinas, CA

Alliance Rubber has manufactured rubber bands in the USA since 1923 to meet your banding needs. We offer standard and custom-printed Pro-Tape,® which combines banding attributes with bar coding capabilities.



Booth #1287

NATIONAL RAISIN CO.

Fowler, CA

Raisels are an innovative, real fruit combination of sweet and sour tastes. We take a luscious golden raisin and add a surprising twist of flavor and dust it in sugar to create a new eating experience sure to please children of all ages. This fruit snack contains 100 percent of your daily Vitamin C and will pucker your lips and leave a smile on your face.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 1300

**Booth #1349
TENNESSEE DEPT.
OF AGRICULTURE
Nashville, TN**

The Tennessee Department of Ag booth presents the best Tennessee-grown produce. We offer Tennessee farmers who care about and take pride in the product they offer. Tennessee is home to over 1,400 produce growers and is one of the top five states in U.S. production of tomatoes and snap beans.



**Booth #1462
BABE' FARMS INC.
Santa Maria, CA**

Babe' Farms is a premier grower/shipper of specialty vegetables. Babe' Farms will exhibit select items from its bountiful year-round harvest of over 30 varieties of baby lettuces, specialty greens, colorful root veggies, baby cauliflower and seasonal specialties.



**Booth #1481
EARTHBOUND FARMS
San Juan Bautista, CA**

Organic produce is all we do, with 100-plus varieties of healthful, delicious organic salads, fruits and vegetables. In 2010 alone, our organic farming will keep about 11.5 million pounds of conventional agricultural chemicals out of the environment.



**Booth #1573
MARIANI PACKING CO.
Vacaville, CA**

Mariani Packing is the largest family-owned global producer of dried fruits. Mariani leads the industry through its development of innovative dried fruit snacks such as Enhanced Wellness and Flavor Sensation.



AISLE 1700

**Booth #1781, 1791
C.H. ROBINSON
Eden Prairie, MN**

C.H. Robinson sources the highest quality products while integrating value-added logistics, distribution and information reporting services. We provide our customers with a full-line of supply chain solutions that meet each individual's needs.



Booth #1391

**HMC FARMS
Kingsburg, CA**

HMC Farms offers a variety of tree fruits including peaches, plums, nectarines and summer whites. We cater to the needs of growers, packers and marketers and have driven sales through increased consumption. HMC Farms has also come up with some innovative packaging, programs and year-round availability for grapes.



Booth #1470

**PEI POTATO BOARD
Charlottetown, PEI, Canada**

Drop by the Prince Edward Island Potato Booth to find out what new and exciting things are happening in the industry in PEI.



Booth #1392

**MIXTEC GROUP
Pasadena, CA**

MIXTEC Group is the No. 1 executive search firm in produce. We provide exceptional executive recruitment and leadership consulting to the industry's top companies.



Booth #1472

**BASKET EASE
Prior Lake, MN**

Check out the easy way to make a fruit basket by using containers designed to make fruit basket assembly fast and easy. We also offer the supplies needed to create beautiful fruit and gift baskets.



AISLE 1400

**Booth #1442, 1443
DOLE FRESH FRUIT
Westlake Village, CA**

Following on its successful summer Go Bananas After Dark campaign, Dole Fresh Fruit is continuing its push to expand the common usages for bananas with new recipes and culinary concepts. And while you're here, visit the Dole Fresh Vegetables team to learn about our new program to help you build consumer sales.



See our ad on page 109

AISLE 1500

**Booth #1557
BEJO SEEDS
Tallahassee, FL**

Bejo Seeds Inc. introduced a fresh market tomato hybrid, developed at the University of Florida that has been released for the premium tomato market. It has a high lycopene content and an attractive, deep-red color due to the crimson gene. This hybrid has the ability to produce fruit with good flavor under a wide range of growing conditions.



**Booth #1560
PRIMA BELLA PRODUCE
Tracy, CA**

Prima Bella ships fresh, super-sweet corn year-round. We offer white, yellow and bi-color corn, with or without husks, in a variety of cob sizes and packs including microwaveable trays.



AISLE 1600

**Booth #1643
MISSION PRODUCE INC.
Oxnard, CA**

Mission Produce is a global player in the avocado and asparagus market and has nationwide distribution centers. New from Mission is our fresh guacamole product line branded Mr. Avocado. The fresh guacamole products will complement Mission's fresh avocado program.



**Booth #1681
HURST'S BERRY FARM
Sheridan, OR**

Hurst's Berry Farm offers the finest berries year-round, from blueberries, blackberries and raspberries, to specialty berries such as currants, gooseberries and our popular Kiwi berries.



AISLE 1800

**Booth #1881
IDAHO POTATO COMMISSION
Eagle, ID**

From the people who brought you Gilligan's Island, the Bucking Bull and the Superhero Produce Manager, we invite you to again be tantalized during your visit to PMA. Please stop by our booth for an exciting experience that we guarantee you will remember and want to share with your family.



**Booth #1891
WADA FARMS POTATOES
Idaho Falls, ID**

Wada Farms is a grower/shipper of Idaho Russet potatoes. Wada Farms Marketing Group holds the exclusive marketing agreement for all potatoes, onions and sweet potatoes sold under the national Dole label.



AISLE 2000

**Booth #2071
D'ARRIGO BROS. CO.
Salinas, CA**

D'Arrigo is a family-owned and operated company specializing in premium fruits and vegetables. Over the past 10 years, D'Arrigo has been committed to increasing awareness of Breast Cancer by placing a pink ribbon on all Andy Boy® products, which can be found in grocery stores domestically and internationally.





GO BANANAS AFTER DARK WITH DOLE



Bananas aren't just for breakfast or a midday snack anymore. This summer, they're the stars of the backyard barbeque. And with our Go Bananas After Dark promotion, consumers will see just how delicious this yellow-skinned fruit can be once the sun goes down. From an after-dark themed microsite to tasty recipes like chocolate chip and marshmallow-stuffed grilled bananas to a Facebook page filled with banana banter, we're doing everything to get consumers excited about eating bananas in entirely new ways, in an entirely different day-part. And more ways to eat bananas mean more bananas flying off your shelves.

Join Dole in the nighttime 'nana sensation with special in-store promotional materials. Contact your Dole representative to find out how your store can go bananas after dark.

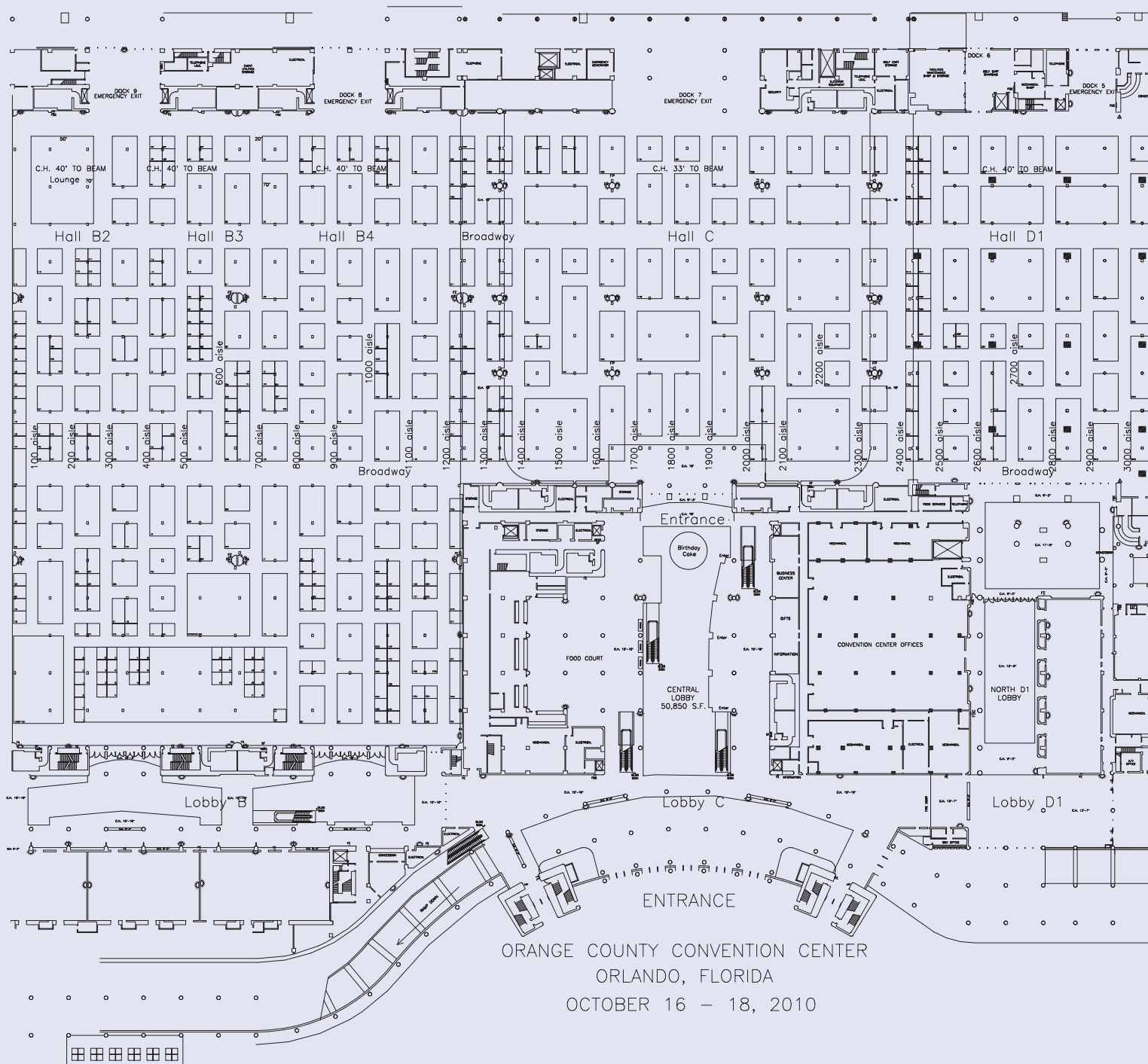
Dole.com/bananas



[Facebook.com/DOLEbananas](https://www.facebook.com/DOLEbananas)

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ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER
ORLANDO, FLORIDA
OCTOBER 16 – 18, 2010

Booth #2081
FRESH SOLUTION
FARMS NETWORK
Moses Lake, WA



The Fresh Solution Farms Network is a partnership of five multi-generational potato and onion companies that own production acreage and processing facilities across North America. Through their supply and logistics optimization services, the Network is uniquely positioned to provide customers with a full-line of "seasonally best" products year-round.

Booth #2089
SUNLIGHT INT'L SALES/JAKOV
P. DULCICH AND SONS
Delano, CA

Sunlight Intl. /Dulcich grows premium table grapes known for excellence inside and out. New bags, display boxes and shelf-danglers for Pretty Lady brand and the Halloween-themed Hobgoblin brand will help perk up your grape sales.



Booth #2155
VILLAGE FARMS
Eatontown, NJ

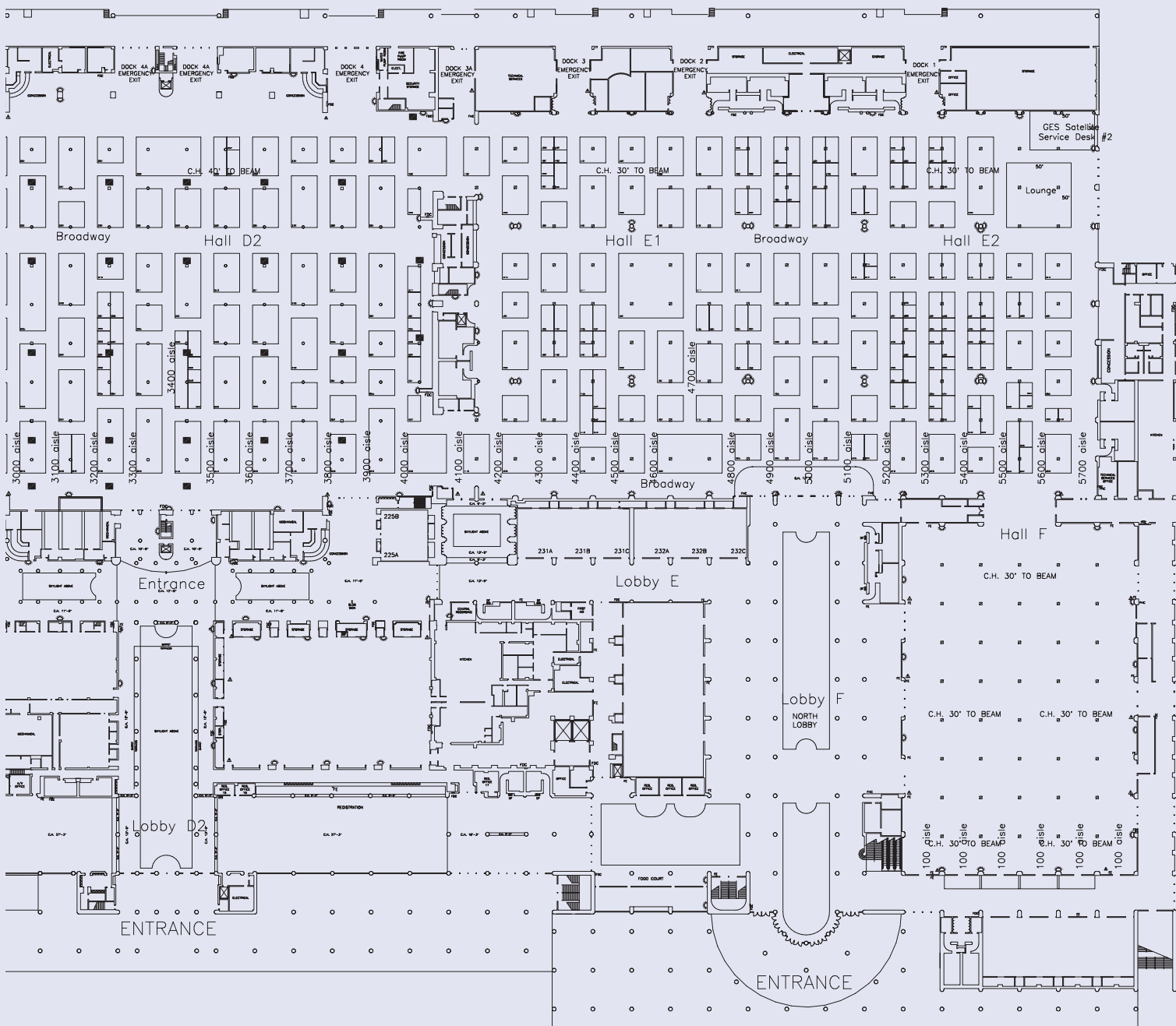
At Village Farms, we exceed customer expectations through our unparalleled commitment to quality produce, remarkable food safety standards and sustainable growing practices utilizing leading edge environmental stewardship principles. Our great tasting, fresh, vine-ripened tomato, bell pepper and cucumber varieties are hand-picked at the peak of flavor.



Booth #2181
WASHINGTON
STATE POTATO
Moses Lake, WA

Washington State potato growers produce over 9 billion pounds of potatoes annually. We produce the highest quality fresh potatoes and the nation's best French fries.





AISLE 2200

**Booth #2255
CHEP
Orlando, FL**



CHEP continues to show its commitment to environmental stewardship by confirming the sustainability credentials of its equipment pooling solution. A life cycle inventory analysis conducted in 2009 shows the CHEP system creates significantly less solid waste, requires less total energy and reduces more greenhouse gas emissions.

**Booth #2261
POTANDON PRODUCE
Idaho Falls, ID**

Potandon Produce offers commodity, exclusive variety potatoes, value-added potato products and a full onion product line. Potandon is your one-stop-shop for all your potato and onion needs.



**POTANDON
PRODUCE**



AISLE 2300

**Booth #2343
CALIFORNIA AVOCADO
COMMISSION
Irvine, CA**

Visit the California Avocado Commission booth to discover the value of California Avocados, consumer preferences and how to maximize your spring-summer avocado sales.



AISLE 2400

**Booth #2461
CHRISTOPHER RANCH
Gilroy, CA**

Baby green garlic, fresh, mild garlic flavor, retail and foodservice packs are all available from April to December. Use them raw or cooked, chopped and sprinkled. Simply trim the roots to make the whole plant edible.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #2493 PROWARE SERVICES Plant City, FL

ProWare Services offers AgWare, software designed for growers, packers, shippers and distributors of fresh produce. AgWare, is affordable to small- and mid-size companies and integrates each business module, from receiving through grower settlements



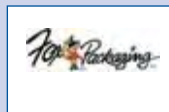
Booth #2542, #4043 L&M COMPANIES Raleigh, NC

L&M is a fully integrated year-round grower, packer and shipper of fresh fruits and vegetables. From the ground up, our company is committed to delivering produce that keeps your customers coming back for more.



Booth #2543 FOX PACKAGING McAllen, TX

Fox Packaging, creator of the Combo® bag, unveils its latest generation potato bag, ranked top-of-the-line in a major university study in the protection against greening



Booth #2561 DURAND-WAYLAND Lagrange, GA

Durand-Wayland Inc. specializes in the design and manufacture of complete, high-performance produce packing lines for the fresh fruit and vegetable industry. Combining advanced technology with expert sales, service and support, Durand-Wayland is the solution for all your packing equipment needs.



Booth #2562 AURORA PRODUCTS INC. Stratford, CT

Aurora packages and distributes only the highest quality and freshest all-natural and organic dried fruits, nuts, trail mixes, salad toppings and granolas. Many of their items are certified Organic and provide consumers a "Heart Healthy" alternative to snacking.



Booth #2584 AMERICAN PACKAGING Story City, IA

American Packaging will be introducing FreshX, a unique Anti-Microbial Technology that extends the shelf-life of fresh produce, fresh vegetables and fresh fruit. Other specialized capabilities include: breathable specifications, registered anti-fog coatings for product visibility, laser micro-perforation, registered coupons for product promotion and pressure sensitive re-close tape.



Booth #2588 PRODUCE CAREERS Arroyo Grande, CA

Produce Careers, an executive search firm, has filled executive and middle management positions for all job categories throughout North America. There are no up-front fees or retainers. In the "who's who" client list, there is 60 percent job search fulfillment with 75 percent of the candidates being non-job seekers.



Booth #2643 EDINBURG CITRUS ASSOCIATION Edinburg, TX

The Edinburg Citrus Association has been growing and packing quality Texas Red Grapefruit and Oranges since 1932. We pack a wow factor in every carton of our deliciously sweet and juicy fruit and assist our customers with programs to stimulate interest and sales with consumers.



Booth #2660 DEVIK INTERNATIONAL INC. White Plains, NY

Devik International is a leading importer of Medjool, Halawi and Deglet Nour Dates from Israel. Our product line includes conventional and organic dates all grown by Hadiklaim, one of the largest date growers.



Booth #2681 OCEAN MIST FARMS Castroville, CA

Ocean Mist Farms introduces its new waxless, recyclable carton. This new carton acts as an alternative to the traditional industry standard of a waxed carton for hydro-cooled vegetable commodities of celery, broccoli and Romaine.



Booth #2742 CATALYTIC GENERATORS Norfolk, VA

We manufacture Ethylene Application Systems for fruit ripening. Our latest innovation, the SmartRipe®, allows an ethylene setpoint entry and achieves complete control of the ethylene level in commercial ripening rooms.



Booth #2742 QA SUPPLIES, LLC Norfolk, VA

We are your one-stop-shop for thermometers, refractometers, firmness testers and almost anything else you need to maintain the highest quality fresh produce.



Booth #2743 THE MARCO CO. Fort Worth, TX

For more than two decades, The Marco Co. has provided the grocery industry with innovative and cost-effective merchandising products. It is still family-owned and operated today with over 500 employees and 1,000,000 square feet of manufacturing space.



Booth #2761 TOM LANGE CO. Springfield, IL

Tom Lange Co. supplies top-quality produce and value-added services at unmatched prices to retail, wholesale and foodservice by leveraging a global network of the finest growers, shippers and logistic partners that bring regional market expertise and a commitment to consistently exceed customer expectations.



Booth #2789 MISIONERO VEGETABLES Gonzales, CA

Things are happening at Misionero Vegetables. As the first fresh-cut processor, we are proud to showcase our new Garden Life™ brand along with our new and innovative value line consisting of Premium Shreds and Petite Hearts.



Booth #2855 STEMILT GROWERS INC. Wenatchee, WA

Stemilt Growers is a leading tree fruit growing, packing and marketing company. Owned and operated by the Mathison family, Stemilt is the nation's largest supplier of sweet cherries and organic tree fruits, as well as a key supplier of Washington-grown apples, pears and stone fruit.



Booth #2881 TURBANA CORP. Coral Gables, FL

Turbana, the leading importer of Fair Trade bananas and plantains and the fourth largest importer of bananas in the United States, also offers Gold pineapple and exotic gourmet plantain chips available in a unique variety of natural flavors. Our commitment to product quality and personal customer satisfaction is second to none.



Booth #2969 HOLLAND FRESH GROUP Den Haag, Netherlands

Holland Fresh Group is the international promotion name of HBAG Groenten en Fruit, which arranges and coordinates the international fruit and vegetables shows for the Dutch exporters and importers of fresh fruit and vegetables.



Booth #3043 READY PAC Yorba Linda, CA

Ready Pac Foods announces its newest innovation in fresh snacking — Fresh Fruit Parfaits. Five varieties include fresh fruit, creamy low-fat vanilla yogurt and crunchy granola in a specially designed proprietary package. Ready Pac provides the solution to help drive incremental sales and profits while delivering a healthful snacking option.



Booth #3065 SUNSWEET Yuba City, CA

Sunsweet offers a variety of dried fruits with all-natural nutrition, delicious taste, and convenience. Products include dried plums, antioxidant blend, Philippine pineapple, Philippine mango, cherries and apricots.



\$1.28 lb

Clifford PRODUCE

family farms

premium

seedless cucumbers

\$2.00 lb

Clifford PRODUCE

family farms

premium

eggplant

Clifford PRODUCE

family farms

premium

peppers

Clifford PRODUCE

family farms

premium

peppers

Clifford PRODUCE

family farms

premium

eggplant

Clifford PRODUCE

family farms

Reader Service #

Delivering The Freshest Produce...

and now The Freshest In-Store Merchandise



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #3081
SUN WORLD INTERNATIONAL
Bakersfield, CA

Since 1976, Sun World International has been a lead developer, grower and marketer of fresh fruits and vegetables. Today, we are focusing on three key areas to bring fresh solutions to the business of providing food for the world: innovate, differentiate and collaborate.



Booth #3161
MACRO PLASTICS
Fairfield, CA

With over 20 years serving the food industry, the demand for Macro Plastics bulk packaging continues to grow as our customers face increasing food safety requirements. Macro's expanded services offerings include recycling, one-way and short-term rentals, and new business development.



Booth #3243
DRISCOLL'S
Watsonville, CA

Only the Finest Berries™ are packed under the Driscoll's brand continually delighting berry consumers with year-round availability of conventional and organic strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and blackberries. For over 100 years, the Driscoll's brand has been trusted and recognized for superior quality.



Booth #3267
TANIMURA & ANTLE
Salinas, CA

The Tanimura & Antle families have been growing premium fresh produce for over 25 years. Based in California's Salinas Valley, this family-owned and operated business focuses on quality, freshness and innovation to deliver a full-line of fresh vegetables across North America, Europe and Asia.



Booth #3273
APIO INC.
Guadalupe, CA

Apio has been a fresh-cut vegetable processor and shipper in the Santa Maria Valley for 31 years. Apio offers a full-line of fresh-cut vegetables under the Eat Smart brand in convenient package designs from a variety of bagged options to trays and ready-to-use meal solutions



Booth #3343
DEL MONTE FRESH
Coral Gables, FL

Del Monte Fresh Produce offers retailers, foodservice, convenience stores and vending operators an array of innovative solutions to address the changing tastes and lifestyle needs of today's consumers. Our extensive distribution network allows just-in-time deliveries of our premium-quality fresh products to your doorstep.



Booth #3362
CF FRESH
Sedro Wooley, WA

For high-quality, certified organic apples, pears, onions, potatoes and more, CF Fresh is your year-round source. We've got the varieties, volumes and expertise needed to grow your organic program.



Booth #3365
NY APPLE ASSOCIATION
Fishers, NY

New York's 2010-2011 apple crop will meet our 5-year average in volume, but will excel in flavor, size and condition. Leading NY favorites are McIntosh, Empire, Gala, Honeycrisp, Cortland, Crispin and Macoun. Harvest began in August and will finish by November.



Booth #3371
MONTEREY MUSHROOMS
Watsonville, CA

Did you know that recent studies have shown that higher intake levels of Vitamin D may be protective against some cancers including pancreatic, breast, colon and colorectal? Learn more about Vitamin D's benefits and why you should be carrying Monterey's new and complete line of Vitamin D mushrooms.



Booth #3381
T. MARZETTI CO.
Columbus, OH

The Marzetti® name has been synonymous with quality and great taste for over 100 years. Exciting and innovative new products join the Marzetti family of dips and dressings.



Booth #3463
PRODUCE BUSINESS
Boca Raton, FL

This marks the 25th anniversary of PRODUCE BUSINESS, the No. 1 publication reaching produce buyers around the world. Covering marketing, merchandising, management and procurement issues that affect sales of produce and floral items, PRODUCE BUSINESS uniquely "initiates industry improvement."



Booth #3463
PERISHABLE PUNDIT
Boca Raton, FL

There is nothing quite like Jim Prevora's Perishable Pundit. Access the Pundit at www.perishablepundit.com and see for yourself. Or come by our booth and meet Jim Prevora and the whole staff.



Booth #3463
PERISHABLE NEWS
Boca Raton, FL

Visit booth #3463 and sign up for a free subscription to PerishableNews.com, the first news site written exclusively for the entire perishables arena. Be among the growing list of subscribers who get instant, daily or weekly emailed announcements.



Booth #3481
BROOKS TROPICALS
Homestead, FL

Since 1928, Brooks Tropicals has grown, packed and shipped the very best tropical fruits and vegetables from sunny South Florida and the Caribbean. Brooks' specialties include: Caribbean Red® Papayas, SlimCado® avocados, starfruit, Uniq Fruit® and Persian limes.



Booth #3543
BUSHWICK COMMISSION CO.
Farmingdale, NY

Bushwick Commission is a 4th generation packer of quality potatoes. We ship from all potato areas of the country throughout the entire year. We also handle commodities such as onions, sweet potatoes, cabbage and a wide variety of other vegetables



Booth #3543
RED JACKET ORCHARDS
Geneva, NY

Red Jacket Orchards all-natural, 100 percent fruit juices will be arriving in Orlando with a newly refreshed look. Our freshly-pressed juices were called "Best on the Planet" by Zagat in 2010.



Booth #3552
GREAT LAKES INTERNATIONAL TRADING INC.
Traverse City, MI

Great Lakes International Trading has been specializing in premium-quality dried fruits, nuts and edible seeds for over 25 years. We offer sealed-in peak-season flavor and freshness in each package utilizing vacuum-sealed technology. In addition to our Vac Pack line, we offer Stand-Up Bag presentations.



Booth #3553
NIAGARA FRESH FRUIT
Burt, NY

Niagara Fresh Fruit has been packing, storing and shipping fresh fruit for over 35 years. Packing comes in poly bags, trays and specialty packs.



Booth #3553
SETTON INTERNATIONAL FOODS
Commack, NY

Producer of "America's Best Tasting Pistachios," Setton Farms offers a full-line of pistachios, nuts, dried fruits, seeds, trail-mixes, chocolates, candies, organic and all-natural products available in bulk and retail packaging



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

Booth #3558

THOMAS E. MOORE INC.
Dover, DE

Thomas E. Moore has the experience to offer the best quality produce at the most competitive prices. We handle all types of fresh produce and we specialize in potatoes. To better serve our customers, we also operate an equipment division with sales, parts and service for packaging weighing, material handling, grading and field equipment.



AISLE 3600

Booth #3643

SUN-MAID GROWERS
Stockton, CA

Sun-Maid Growers is the world's largest producer and processor of raisins and other premium dried fruits including prunes, dried apricots, figs, dates, dried peaches and dried apples. The Sun-Maid Girl, trademarked in 1916, is the leading brand of raisins and dried fruits in the United States and around the world.



Booth #3643

VALLEY FIG GROWERS
Fresno, CA

Valley Fig Growers is the sales leader for all varieties and package types of California dried figs. Look for us under the Blue Ribbon Orchard Choice and Sun-Maid labels.



Booth #3653

GRIMMWAY FARMS
Bakersfield, CA

Grimmway Farms is a grower/shipper of fresh and processed carrots, carrot juice concentrate and a full-line of organic carrots, fruits and vegetables under the Cal-Organic label. Grimmway also grows and ships year-round supplies of potatoes and citrus.



A family of Growing companies



Greenhouse Produce Company LLC

Booth #3665

THERMAL TECHNOLOGIES
Ardmore, PA

Thermal Technologies is a provider of produce ripening room systems. Our patented TarPless® design is the most widely used in the marketplace, processing over 100 million pounds of bananas across the United States, Canada and Mexico every day.



Booth #3681

SEALD SWEET INTERNATIONAL
Vero Beach, FL

Seald Sweet specializes in the full citrus category and fresh produce such as apples, grapes, pears and more. We proudly provide exceptional value and outstanding service by delivering the finest produce available worldwide.



Booth #3689

ITAUEIRA
Fortaleza, CE, Brazil

The Best Brazilian melons are a success in USA and Canada. In 2008, Itauera launched its Canary melons in nets during PMA. These yellow-skin melons, sold by the brand mark REI and individually packed into nets, have a unique, delicious taste.



AISLE 3700

Booth #3759 GREENHOUSE PRODUCE CO. LLC
Vero Beach, FL

Greenhouse Produce is a grower-owned marketing company representing over 200 acres of hydroponic greenhouse facilities, with year-round production capabilities. Products include Beefsteak, Grape and on-the-vine tomatoes, colored peppers and seedless cucumbers.

Booth #3759

PACIFIC TOMATO GROWERS/PACIFIC TRIPLE E
Palmetto, FL

For more than 80 years, the Esformes and the Heller families have been delivering freshness and flavor to their customers. Customer service remains a priority, while integrity and commitment are the virtues still focused on by the fourth generation. Heller and Jackie Sunripe tomatoes are available year-round.



Booth #3781

MANN PACKING
Salinas, CA

Stop by our booth to check out Mann's all-in-one Meat and Cheese Vegetable Platter, featuring original occasion-based merchandising labels — perfect for any event, all year long. Also featured are Mann's fresh-cut Butternut Squash Cubes and Sweet Potato Fries.



AISLE 3800

Booth #3843 AG-PAK INC.
Gasport, NY

Ag-Pak supplies industry-leading produce packaging equipment. We offer weighing, bagging, optical sorting, washing and polishing equipment from the world's best manufacturers, featuring NEWTEC 4015 and 4014XB weighers, which will provide a new industry benchmark in speed and efficiency.



Booth #3881

TEMPLE-INLAND
Austin, TX

Temple-Inland is proud to be a part of helping growers, shippers and retailers bring products to market. We offer a wide array of corrugated products ranging from common footprint to multi-color and pre-printed packaging, and we can tailor a solution to meet virtually any need.

Temple-Inland

Booth #3891

BORTON & SONS
Yakima, WA

Borton & Sons is a premier grower/shipper of quality apples, pears and cherries aspiring to the highest level of excellence in our products and services. We're committed to our customers' ongoing success through continuous innovative programs/solutions and our integrity that has been our hallmark for over 90 years.



AISLE 3900

Booth #3943 COPEXEU ASOCIACION CIVIL
Buenos Aires, Argentina

Come to our booth and increase your off-season business by meeting Argentine growers and exporters of fresh produce.



AISLE 4000

Booth #4063 FRUIT PATCH
Dinuba, CA

Fruit Patch is a leading packer and marketer of peaches, plums, nectarines, grapes, blueberries, specialty fruits and citrus in the San Joaquin Valley. The company continues to provide best-in-class quality, taste, service and honest dealings. We invite you to visit our booth and speak with the dedicated team.



Booth #4067

MICKY'S MINIS
Millstadt, IL

Micky's Minis is celebrating our 20th Anniversary with several outstanding new products and a number of special promotional items to help with non-holiday floral sales. For example, we are offering a 2-inch miniature potted plant with a handsome faux leather pencil holder for Administrative Professional's Day.



Booth #4090

HOLLANDIA PRODUCE / LIVE GOURMET
Carpinteria, CA

Live Gourmet offers hydroponically grown living lettuces, cress and arugula by Hollandia Produce. Experience the difference freshness can make.



AISLE 4200

Booth #4283

AWETA AUTOLINE INC.
Reedley, CA

Aweta-Autoline is a global company specializing in creating comprehensive sorting and packing systems for fruit, vegetables and flowers. One of our newest members to the family is the MEGA GS+. This machine guarantees fast, accurate and efficient sorting of pineapples. Pineapples are sorted by weight and optional color and diameter.



Booth #4291

GFF / GIRARD INC.
City of Industry, CA

GFF offers unique dressings each year to give variety to your salads. This year, we are presenting eight new dressings and sauces for your tasting delight: Cilantro Lime Vinaigrette, Tahini Dressing, Fiery Buffalo BBQ Sauce, Jerk Sauce, Cranberry Mayonnaise, Peach Citrus Dip, Raspberry/Walnut Dip and Pomegranate Dip.



AISLE 4300

Booth #4361

HERB THYME FARMS
Pico Rivera, CA

HerbThyme Farms is one of America's largest fresh organic herb growers. Shipping from regional facilities coast to coast, we deliver fresh from our farms to your shelves.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 4400

Booth #4443

LGS SPECIALTY SALES LTD
Bronx, NY

LGS has enhanced its product mix with exceptional-quality avocados, grapes, apples, pears, stone fruit, lemons, navel, Minneolas and other sensational citrus from around the world. LGS is a consistent, year-round supplier and offers first access to pioneering new varieties and packaging, which are designed to meet all your needs.



See our ad on page 118

Booth #4567

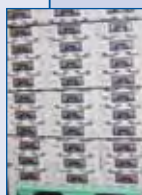
POM WONDERFUL LLC
Los Angeles, CA

Roll International owns and operates major U.S. agricultural holdings including Paramount Farms, the world's largest grower and processor of almonds and pistachios; POM Wonderful, the largest U.S. producer of the Wonderful variety pomegranates and producer of 100 percent pomegranate juice; and Paramount Citrus, the nation's largest integrated grower, shipper and packer of fresh citrus.

Booth #4765

AIRDEX INTERNATIONAL INC.
Henderson, NV

The worldwide patented Airdex, also known as "World's lightest pallets," weighs only 7-10 pounds, can carry 3,500 pounds, dramatically reduces CO2 emissions with no deforestation and slashes cargo costs. These Airdex pallets are sanitary, shock absorbing, thermal-insulated, recyclable/repairable and free after a single airfreight journey.



AISLE 4500

Booth #4583

BEACHSIDE PRODUCE
Guadalupe, CA

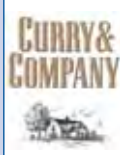
Beachside Produce LLC is one of the leading producers and marketers of commodity-packed broccoli in the United States. In addition to the numerous grown commodities, Beachside Produce provides a full-line of vegetable consolidation for its customer base.



AISLE 4800

Booth #4851
CURRY & CO.
Brooks, OR

Curry & Co. markets and distributes fresh onions, sweet onions, blueberries and potatoes from North and South America through multiple shipping locations across the country. Since 1967, we have sustained long relationships with our customers with precise quality, great service and unique programs.



AISLE 4900

Booth #4963

WEST PAK AVOCADO
Temecula, CA

West Pak Avocado Inc. is an industry leader in the global supply of quality avocados, specializing in value-added and the state-of-the-art ripening services.



AISLE 4900

Booth #4964
GOURMET TRADING
Los Angeles, CA

Gourmet Everyday offers green, white and purple asparagus, as well as blueberries and superblues.



AISLE 5000

Booth #5063

THE USA BOUQUET CO.
Doral, FL

The USA Bouquet Co. is a national distributor of premium floral products with full-service manufacturing and distribution facilities in Florida, Illinois, California, Georgia, Texas and New Jersey. The USA Bouquet Co. services mass and grocery retailers, E-commerce and retail florists with their floral needs.



AISLE 4500

Booth #4551

SAGE FRUIT CO.
Overland Park, KS

Sage Fruit is a grower, shipper and packer of Washington State apples, cherries and pears. We provide great quality, service and marketing programs to meet your needs.



AISLE 4600

Booth #4643

MASTRONARDI PRODUCE/SUNSET
Kingsville, ON, Canada

Mastronardi Produce/SUNSET® grows nationally recognized brands such as Campari®, Kumato™, Splendido™ and Zima™. We pride ourselves in discovering the most flavorful gourmet tomatoes, cucumbers and peppers for you to enjoy.



AISLE 4800

Booth #4865
WAVERLY PLASTICS
Waverly, IA

Tug & Tote Produce Bags manufactured by Waverly Plastics dispense one-at-a-time from a box that integrates beautifully into your produce department. It is also available in biodegradable plastic formulation.



AISLE 4500

Booth #4559

RED BLOSSOM SALES
Salinas, CA

Red Blossom Berries' Fast & Fresh now offers red blossom air ride trucks, experienced drivers with strawberry know-how and local and long haul.



AISLE 4700

Booth #4757

DULCINEA FARMS
Ladera Ranch, CA

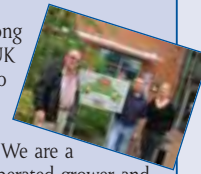
At the heart of Dulcinea® lies true passion, innovation and quality you won't find anywhere else. Our passion drives us everyday to provide the freshest produce and the taste consumers absolutely love year-round.



AISLE 4800

Booth #4893
SCOTT FARMS INC.
Lucama, NC

Scott Farms Inc., along with Scott Farms UK Ltd., is pleased to announce our first-year of exhibiting at Fresh Summit 2010. We are a family-owned and operated grower and shipper in North Carolina providing a full-line of fresh sweet potato packs and products to customers around the world.



AISLE 4900

Booth #4982
FRUIT2DAY
Broomfield, CO

Meet our new, larger value-size bottle and Special Edition Antioxidant Potent-C in Blackberry Black Currant. Plus, get a sneak peek at new Fruit2day Morning. Combining real fruit bits, rich fruit purees and all natural fruit juices, Fruit2day is close to eating real fruit.



AISLE 5000

Booth #4988

NORTH BAY PRODUCE INC.
Jackson, MI

North Bay Produce Inc. is a globally operated, grower-owned marketing and distribution cooperative. We grow and distribute a continuous and diverse range of fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year from U.S. and Latin American farms. Key commodities include apples, asparagus, blueberries, blackberries, snow peas and sugar snaps.



AISLE 5000

Booth #5081

POTTER INC.
Bryan, OH

Potter Inc.'s fruit and gift basket programs are customized for our clients. Kits and supplies are available for in-store packing, as well as unlimited offerings of ready-to-sell baskets. For those who have yet to finalize holiday fruit baskets for 2010, Potter Inc. can create a program to fit your immediate needs.



AISLE 5000

Booth #5084

PACIFIC ORGANIC PRODUCE
San Francisco, CA

Pacific Organic Produce has been packing, shipping and marketing fruit grown by high quality organic farmers since 1994. We are now one of the largest marketers of organic treefruit in the United States. We offer year-round programs out of multiple shipping points throughout the United States.



PMA AISLE-BY-AISLE BOOTH REVIEW

AISLE 5100

Booth #5190 **RPE** *Bancroft, WI*

Let small potatoes be your big category driver. See the full line of Tasteful Selections specialty baby potatoes available in three sizes, nine flavors and 19 SKUs, including our Signature Flavor, Honey Gold. RPE is a category leader with a focus on innovation.



AISLE 5200

Booth #5243 **CMI** *Wenatchee, WA*

Over the past 20 years, CMI has steadily grown into one of Washington State's largest apple, pear and cherry shipper and growers and continues to be a pioneer in new varieties, sustainability, creative packaging and growing technologies.



Booth #5263 **PAKSENSE** *Boise, ID*

PakSense Ultra Labels are a new class of temperature recorder. Labels measure surface temperature; do not require re-calibration to maintain accuracy; are recyclable; and promote better quality and safety decisions.



AISLE 5300

Booth #5343 **CHESTNUT HILL FARMS** *Doral, FL*

Stop by our booth to sample some of the sweetest pineapple you've ever tasted and find out what we're doing to help our customers increase sales and profits in this expanding category.



Booth #5356 **SUNDIA CORP.** *Oakland, CA*

Sundia provides nutritious and convenient snacking options that are perfect for many channels. For its True Fruit line of fruit cups, Sundia picks fruit at the peak of ripeness, peels and cuts the fruit and packages it in convenient 8- and 20-oz. cups that are perfect for the on-the-go lifestyle.



Booth #5359 **SCIENTIFIC CERTIFICATION** *Emeryville, CA*

Scientific Certification Systems is now offering a Pesticide Residue Management program for pesticide MRL compliance. We use our 25 years of residue sampling data to provide knowledge of regulatory risks to growers before the planting season occurs.



Booth #5363 **ICS LOGISTICS/JAXPORT** **REFRIGERATED SERVICES** *Jacksonville, FL*

ICS Logistics provides expertise and service in perishable and dry warehousing, stevedoring, refrigerated transportation, and many other services across the continental United States. We are uniquely equipped to meet the needs of import/export businesses and offer ready-access to distribution by truck, rail or ship.



Booth #5364 **COMPU-TECH INC.** *Wenatchee, WA*

Compu-Tech Inc. has served the agribusiness industry as a custom software provider since 1974. We offer fully integrated accounting and business software solutions.



Booth #5367 **OPTIMARA GROUP** *Nashville, TN*

You know the Optimara brand to be the world's most widely recognized name for African violets. We offer more varieties with fuller blooms than anyone. But, did you know we also offer outstanding miniature-orchids, assorted foliage and begonias? Stop by our booth to see the superior quality that Optimara provides.



Booth #5368 **DREAM FOODS** **INTERNATIONAL** *Santa Monica, CA*

Dream Foods International proudly announces the rapid sales growth of our new organic single-serve Italian Volcano® Blood Orange and Tangerine juices and organic premium lemonade and limeade. On July 14, 2010, the *New York Times* referred to the Italian Volcano® Limeade as "delightful." Also see our organic lemon juice.



Booth #5381 **MARIANI NUT CO.** *Winters, CA*

Mariani Nut Co., a leading California grower and supplier of premium nuts, offers a new line of flavored almonds in sweet, savory and spicy varieties. Mariani also offers customers whole, chopped, slivered and sliced almonds in a variety of packaging options. Major varieties of walnuts will also be featured in a wide range of sizes and combinations.



AISLE 5400

Booth #5458 **GRAPPLE FRUITS** *Wenatchee, WA*

Grapple® brand apples are reaching customers with a new taste and flavor. Try one of the latest juicy, crispy, up-and-coming gourmet Grapple® brand apples at our booth.



Booth #5483 **WHOLLY GUACAMOLE** *Fort Worth, TX*

Industry leader Freshnerized Foods®, maker of top-ranked Wholly Guacamole and award-winning Wholly Salsa, unveiled an exciting extension to the Wholly family of products — a fresh Mexican snack-food line. Wholly Queso is a fresh-tasting and more healthful option when compared to shelf-stable cheese dips.



Booth #5486 **INTERGROW** **GREENHOUSES INC.** *Albion, NY*

Intergrow Greenhouses harvests fully ripe, American-grown produce. These are delivered within 24 hours. Red, Yellow, Orange, Plum and Cocktail tomatoes-on-the-vine are among the best.



AISLE 5500

Booth #5548 **RIVERRIDGE PRODUCE** *Sparta, MI*

Riverridge Produce is a full-service grower-shipper/packer/exporter offering their services to Michigan, Wisconsin, Eastern and Canadian Apples, as well as Caramel and Gourmet Caramel Apples and Old Fashioned Fresh Apple Cider.



Booth #5567 **FRESKA PRODUCE** **INTERNATIONAL** *Oxnard, CA*

With over 55 years combined industry experience Freska was established in August, 2004, with the sole purpose of sourcing the freshest mangos and limes from around the world. Freska sources mangos from Brazil, Ecuador, Perú, Guatemala and México. We have availability 365 days a year with varieties such as Hadens, Tommy Atkins, Ataulfos, Kents and Keitts.



Booth #5572 **IMG CITRUS** *Vero Beach, FL*

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AISLE 5600

Booth #5643 **JEM-D** **INTERNATIONAL** *Kingsville, ON, Canada*

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Booth #5673 **IPPOLITO PRODUCE** *Salinas, CA*

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How The Twin Cities Stay On Top



Wholesalers respond to evolving business climate and diverse population in the Twin Cities. **BY SANDY LINDBLAD LEE**

While keeping their focus on food safety in the forefront, produce wholesalers and distributors in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Region are expanding their product lines for specific demographic targets and answering the ongoing demand for locally grown produce from both the retail and food-service sectors. While adapting to the evolving trends in the Twin Cities, wholesalers emphasize their centralized location in the Upper Midwest provides the added benefit of transportation cost savings to their customers.

Diverse Demographics

An increasingly diverse demographic profile of the region provides a unique blend of cultures and ethnicity outside of the strong Scandinavian influence that used to dominate the area. Immigrants from 160 countries have arrived in Minnesota during the past decade, according to a report from the University of Minnesota College of Education & Human Development. Immigrants born in Somalia outnumbered all others, followed by those born in India, Ethiopia and Mexico.

St. Paul has been recognized as the city with this highest Hmong population in the

United States, according to reports from the U.S. Census Bureau. Minnesota's population will continue to become more racially and ethnically diverse, states a report from the State Demographic Center at the Minnesota Department of Administration. Between 2010 and 2015, the non-white population in the state is projected to grow 35 percent, compared to 7 percent for the white population, while the Hispanic population is expected to increase 47 percent. Several savvy Twin Cities

wholesalers are aware of the importance of answering to the growing needs in the Latino customer segment.

"Some of our greatest growth areas are our produce, grocery and dairy lines for Hispanics, which include the 'El Burrito Mercado' label," reports Jim Hannigan, president and CEO of J & J Distributing Co., based in Saint Paul, MN. "We do all the marketing for that label, including the chips, tortillas and salsas." J & J offers its retail clients a "full store program," which includes the all-encompassing service involved with introducing the entire line into retail outlets. "Although sales are growing, this is a much more difficult category. We've been focusing on adding Hispanic



Minneapolis/St. Paul Market Share Information

COMPANY	TRADE NAMES	TOTAL Area Stores	CURRENT Market Share
Roundy's Supermarkets Inc.: MILWAUKEE, WI	Rainbow Foods	32	16
Lund Food Holdings Inc.: EDINA, MN	Byerly's; Lunds	20	9.2
SUPERVALU Inc.: EDEN PRAIRIE, MN	Cub Foods	37	9.2
Walmart Stores Inc.: BENTONVILLE, AR	Walmart Supercenter	10	9.0
Target Corporation: MINNEAPOLIS, MN	SuperTarget	23	8.8
Costco Wholesale Corp.: ISSAQUAH, WA	Costco Wholesale	5	8.7
Sam's Club: BENTONVILLE, AR	Sam's Club	9	8.3
Jerry's Enterprises Inc.: EDINA, MN	Country Market; Cub Foods; Jerry's Foods	18	7.5
Kowalski's Companies Inc.: WOODBURY, MN	Cub Foods; Kowalski's Market	9	2.6
Aldi Inc.: BATAVIA, IL	Aldi	22	2.6
Coborn's Inc.: SAINT CLOUD, MN	Cash Wise Foods; Coborn's; Coborn's Superstore	10	2.3
Knowlan's Super Markets Inc.: SAINT PAUL, MN	Festival Foods; Knowlan's Food Market	9	2.2
Trader Joe's Co.: MONROVIA, CA	Trader Joe's	5	1.7
Nash Finch Company: EDINA, MN	Econofoods; Family Fresh Market	7	1.4
The Market Place: ANNANDALE, MN	Cub Foods; The Market Place	4	1.1
Whole Foods Market Inc.: AUSTIN, TX	Whole Foods Market	2	1.1
Haug Corporation: MINNETONKA, MN	Cub Foods	2	0.8
J & L Enterprises Inc.: CHASKA, MN	Cooper's County Market; Cooper's SuperValu	3	0.6
Johannesson's Inc.: BEMIDJI, MN	Marketplace Foods	2	0.5
County Market: ANDOVER, MN	County Market	2	0.5
Radermacher Foods Inc.: JORDAN, MN	Cub Foods; Radermacher's Fresh Market	2	0.4
Other operations		142	5.7

Data courtesy of Chain Store Guide, Tampa FL.

items to our Cub store lines, and we work with our customers on merchandising as well," he explains.

Latino products are one of several growing

segments in the fresh produce industry that have necessitated a much larger facility for J & J. "We've gone from 20,000 square feet of space in 1997, up to the 108,000 square feet where

we now operate," remarks Hannigan.

"Our Hispanic business continues to grow," states Phillip Brooks, president of H. Brooks & Co. LLC, in New Brighton, MN. "We

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"Our Hispanic business continues to grow. We now feature 300-plus items with our range of products including soda beverages specific to the Hispanic preferences, specialized quesos and other different cheeses, homemade tortillas, and fresh produce specifically obtained for the Hispanic preferences. We also offer customized help with merchandising and setup for independent retailers who need help expanding that category."

— Phillip Brooks
H. Brooks & Co.



Jim Hannigan, J & J Distributing Co.



Phillip Brooks, H. Brooks & Co.

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have more customers joining us each week." Brooks claims the list of Mexican and Latin American grocery and product items the company carries is "the most comprehensive found under one roof. We now feature 300-plus items with our range of products including soda beverages specific to the Hispanic preferences, specialized quesos and other different cheeses, homemade tortillas, and fresh produce specifically obtained for the Hispanic preferences," he adds. "We also offer customized help with merchandising and setup for independent retailers who need help expanding that category."

Brooks continues, "We are also helping manufacturers who want their items introduced into stores, which could include anything from Piñatas and pinto beans, to the wildly popular Mexican candy and hard-to-find varieties of fresh chili peppers. At the same time, our core is still the perishable side of the business."

For Wholesale Produce Supply LLC, headquartered in Minneapolis, MN, customized assistance to the Latino population includes its expertise through a long-time specialization in tomatoes. Since salsa surpassed ketchup as the most popular condiment of American consumers, the WPS tomato supply chain and availability provides

important benefits, says Brian Hauge, president. "Because of our vast supply base, we have the ability to react quicker to procure and deliver the freshest and the widest selection of tomato varieties available from local, national and international sources."

The Foodservice Sector

Although the sluggish economy has reportedly had some effect on the foodservice sector in the Twin Cities, the majority of the produce wholesalers agree that the segment remains strong. H. Brooks has become "a great logistics expert for foodservice providers, and we offer assistance as expeditors in packing and distribution for our foodservice customers," notes Brooks. Through the company's fresh-cut operation, "We have a great program for foodservice distributors. Our larger packages of fresh-cut product reduce labor costs and waste and provide increased quality and shelf-life."

"Twin Cities' consumers are becoming more educated and are looking for different varieties of produce," says Wholesale Produce's Art Quiggle, vice president and head of tomato procurement. "The first place they may see something new is at a restaurant that features unique types and cuts of produce through an artistic presentation on the plate."

"Our year-round sweet onion program is very appealing to our food-service customers as well as to retail. Sweet onion varieties are improving all the time. They provide thick rings and are firmer, which make them easier for baking and frying."

— Beth Arel
The Brings Co.



Beth Arel & Pat Coan, Brings Co.

"Although our customers are mostly retail, we are diversifying as we look toward the future, and we are moving more into foodservice," reveals J & J's Hannigan. "Our fresh-cut fruits and vegetables provide convenience and labor-saving."

"Our year-round sweet onion program is very appealing to our foodservice customers as well as to retail," notes Beth Arel, sales manager at Brings Co., located in New Brighton, MN. Brings' specialties are onion and rutabaga repacking and distribution. "Sweet onion varieties are improving all the time. They provide thick rings and are firmer, which make them easier for baking and frying."

Locally Grown Remains Popular

Locally grown fruits and vegetables remain one of the hottest categories on the shelves of produce departments in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan region, and wholesalers are stepping up to respond to that demand. Products from Minnesota and nearby Wisconsin and Michigan have consistently flourished in popularity when they

peak during the summer and early fall. With buying local one of the biggest trends in today's produce industry, these in-season products become even more attractive.

Executives at Wholesale Produce Supply have noticed the importance of locally grown to buyers and consumers, and they point out benefits of attaining product through their company. "Our program at Wholesale is unique to everyone else's because we support an enormous distribution area," explains Hauge. "We have the luxury of bringing back product from smaller growing regions, and it's

easier and more cost-effective for us to procure the products and supply our customers."

For a guaranteed supply chain, "We actually contracted with specific growers to grow a determined amount for our customers," Hauge continues. "For added food safety assurance, we have suppliers we're assisting to either maintain [third-party] certification, or they are working toward certification in the near future. We're working with key grower partners to bring them to the next level."

Added shelf-life of locally grown is also a benefit from Wholesale Produce. "We can lit-



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What's New In The Twin Cities?

H. Brooks & Co. LLC, New Brighton, MN:

The company, which will celebrate 105 years of continual operation in November, has added a new dimension with the acquisition of The Brings Co., formerly based in St. Paul, MN. According to Brooks' president, Phillip Brooks, all the key staff members of the onion and rutabaga packer-distributor have been retained. The Brings Co. operations moved into the H. Brooks building in May.

"Our top priorities will remain the same as they have been," stresses Brings' president, Pat Coan. "We strive to consistently deliver the best quality onions for a fair price, with superior customer service. We have connections in the onion business that go back to the 30s." The Brings Co. was founded in 1931.

The full-scale supplier of onions also maintains a year-round sweet onion program. Among the sweet onion offerings, "We have been asked to be the designated re-packer for the Oso Sweet brand for the Twin Cities and Chicago," Coan announces.

"The Brings Co. is considered one of the top sources for sweet onions," Brooks adds, "which includes traceability on each and every package that is shipped. And food safety considerations are critical elements for both of

our companies."

A director of food safety and quality assurance has been added to the team at H. Brooks. Imme Fernandez's credentials include a Masters' Degree in Food Science. "We've always been a leader in food safety," Brooks notes. "This takes us another notch higher."

In other news, H. Brooks was named Vendor of the Year by the Minnesota Grocers Association in August. "In general," Brooks says, "we are focused on innovative ways to help our customers sell more produce. Our emphasis is on freshness and speed of delivery — and consumers notice the difference. Whether it be the relationships with our growers, or through our specially designed warehouse, we know how to crank out the best at lightning speed for maximum freshness."

Brooks reiterates the results of a Food Marketing Institute consumer survey. "Ninety percent of consumers report that high quality produce is very important when deciding where to shop."

Wholesale Produce Supply Co., Minneapolis, MN: Company president, Brian Hauge, announces the addition of a full-scale onion repacking operation. New packing lines

were installed and fully operational by mid-August. Packed under the "Harvest Crisp" label, Hauge reports, "We initially will be offering the popular consumer-size packs, but we plan to eventually bring in product in bulk. We can now custom-pack any variety, size and color according to the customers' specifications." Industry veteran, Dave Kadlec, coordinates all the onion-buying.

More efforts to stay "leading edge," according to Hauge, include a food safety program "which is leaps and bounds above our competitors. We have full traceability on our produce. We also send our food safety employees to special audit courses and we remain active on industry committees relating to food safety."

"We think it's important to remain active in the decision-making efforts to provide the safest and freshest produce," notes Art Quiggle, vice president and head of tomato procurement. As one of the larger wholesalers in the Midwestern region, "We closely monitor our tomatoes from womb to tomb. We are making more and more efforts to support growers and shippers that have the same philosophies that we do about food safety."

"We also continue to support our local growers as much as possible — as we have in the past — including home-grown produce in

erally get the products from field to market in 24 hours or less," claims Hauge.

"Not to mention, we will cool the product as fast and efficiently as possible," adds Wholesale's Quiggle.

"Americans are buying locally grown like never before," stresses Brooks of H. Brooks. "Consumers want to know where their food was grown, who grew it and how. People want to know about the heritage and track record of what they are eating. Our company has a long history of close relationships with farmers who harvest the most delicious and best produce. These farmers, many of whom are second and third generation, know their land and their craft." Sweet corn, peppers, zucchini and eggplant are some of the more prevalent homegrown choices.

Brooks further suggests the utilization of the Minnesota Grown Program through the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for more ideas and support for promoting locally grown.

J & J's Hannigan is answering the locally grown demand by growing his own supplies on the acreage in his own facility near downtown Saint Paul. Hannigan is developing a full-scale hydro-farm at his own packing facility. His operations are situated in the middle of an urban area near the state's capitol building.

"We're taking baby steps on the project," he stresses. He is working with several partners, including the city of St. Paul and X-Cel Energy, in making the project a reality.

Sources already in place for J & J include a wide base of local organic growers, since the company has specialized in organics for several years. "We have a strong local program as well as a good local organic program," maintains Hannigan. "It's the best of both worlds for our customers. Even our caramel apple growers are all local." Last fall, the company introduced "Homemade," a new label for its caramel apples.

The Brings Co. is also answering the local demand. "We are selling locally grown rutabagas and onions when they are in season," reports Arel. "We will be packing 3-lb. bags of onions with the locally grown label."

The Organic Explosion

To supply the steadily increasing demand for organics, several Twin Cities' wholesalers attribute their increased sales to one of the more popular segments in today's food industry. "About 30 percent of J & J's produce is organic," reports Hannigan. "Minnesota is an unusual state. It is very proactive and health-conscious, and people are willing to pay the extra dollars for product they think is better for



Paul Piazza, Minnesota Produce Inc.



Brian Hauge & Art Quiggle, Wholesale Produce Supply Co.

season out of the Midwest growing regions," adds Hauge. "We have already made exclusive contracts with local growers for peppers, tomatoes and other Minnesota-grown products."

When it comes to quality control, Wholesale Produce maintains there are times where nothing compares to manual labor. "We continually travel the world to seek out the newest in tomato repack and color sorting, and we still haven't found anything to take the place of hand packing," Hauge stresses. "We believe the product can still get damaged too much by automation. To maintain the best quality tomatoes, we feel that hand packing is still the best."

J & J Distributing Co., St. Paul, MN: Jim Hannigan, president and CEO, continues his focus on increasing green and sustainability efforts in the Twin Cities. Several years ago, he was already implementing many of the initiatives that many are still only talking about in the current eco-friendly environment. Today, he is working toward a full-scale hydro-farm, based right in the middle of an urban area, which is very close to Minnesota's state capitol building. This urban farm, as he calls it, will use alternative energy, employ St. Paul residents and provide homegrown produce to

meet the demand for locally grown products. "It's all about job creation and reducing the carbon footprint," Hannigan notes, and he has been working with a lot of people trying to make his urban farm a reality. "The city of St. Paul is giving all its support to get this project off the ground," he says, adding that he has received a \$550,000 economic stimulus grant to help get this project off and running. The two-acre greenhouse meets the stimulus plan guidelines because it will focus on energy efficiency and preserve and create jobs, explains Dave Gontarek, a city planner who has been working with Hannigan.

J & J's packing facility is situated in the middle of the state capitol's designated redevelopment area, a region surrounding the city's light rail system. Hannigan is working with hydroponic and alternate energy-related partners in the U.S. and Canada, along with colleagues at Ohio State University, who have taken on a study of urban farming and selected Hannigan's concept as a special project.

Hydroponic tomatoes will be a part of the product line here and will be packed under the "St. Pauli Boy" label. Also new at the company, "We're doing an upscale cut fruit program," which is already a part of the displays in select retail outlets in the Twin Cities,

reports Hannigan.

J & J revamped its Web site and launched the new look this year. "It is state-of-the-art," Hannigan says. "We now have software that will help get our customers more actively involved in our Web site."

Minnesota Produce Inc., Minneapolis, MN: This 49-year-old company added bananas to its line this year. According to president, Paul Piazza, "One of our clients was interested in trying to sell bananas to his retail customers," so Minnesota Produce completed the necessary steps to begin bringing bananas to the Twin Cities. "It also opened up a few more doors for us, including the addition of pineapples. We haven't had to reinvent the wheel; we're just making use of our resources that already exist."

Piazza adds that he has noticed a welcome trend. "After so many years of the pendulum swinging toward the corporate extreme, that occurrence seems to have slowed. We're able to hold onto our portion of the business. There are still customers out there that appreciate the additional service and expertise that we can provide." The bulk of the company's customer base remains with foodservice distributors and processors. **pb**

them." Hannigan adds that with some produce items, he prefers organic. "The taste, the smell and the overall quality are better," he claims.

Hannigan continues, "J & J not only provides the products, but extensive merchandising assistance for organic departments. In addition, we help retail cashiers easily identify organic produce by offering installation of 'pull-n-pak' retail merchandising bags in produce departments."

Maintaining a certified-organic warehouse and fresh-cut facility, H. Brooks has put increased focus on that segment of its customer base for several years. "Organics have been a major growth area and focal point for us," notes Brooks. "Our efforts are guided by experts in the organic field, including our work with the Organic Trade Association. We're also conducting sustainable agriculture programs with local and regional growers with certification for food safety in place. Whatever the niches might be for our retail customers, we want to help them simplify their supply chain and help them focus on how they can use their produce departments to differentiate themselves from the competition," he adds.

With its current momentum, the natural/organic food segment comprises 11 percent

of all national produce sales, according to a report from Packaged Facts, a market research publisher in New York, NY.

Food Safety And Sanitation Increase Customer Confidence

Food safety and sanitation, lot traceability and security require daily monitoring to maintain customer confidence, emphasizes Wholesale's Brian Hauge. "Food safety is obviously our No. 1 priority," he stresses, "not only in our packaging, but through the growers from whom we buy. We have monitoring in place to make sure Good Agricultural Practices are maintained."

Hauge points out Wholesale's leadership role in the region regarding critical facets for optimum food safety maintenance. "Wholesale Produce started its HACCP (Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points) program back in 1997, before most people in our industry even knew about HACCP. Our program has evolved and grown to cover all aspects of HACCP," he explains. "Were not stopping at where the government says we should be; we go beyond that. We already have policies in place for Social Responsibility at our facility and are making sure the people we deal with are doing the same. Our lot traceability system was developed five years

before the government mandate was issued in December of 2005."

"We have outside audits done by USDA, Silliker, Primus, ASI, DRS and MCIA for organics," continues Hauge. "Not only do we have these audits, but we welcome them. It's with this outside information we feel we can learn and offer a better, safer product. In addition to all of our holding rooms being sanitized every 60 to 90 days, we also have an independent lab come to swab our lines and rooms to test for bacteria. Food safety has always been a top priority at Wholesale Produce — from the cleanliness of our facility and the ongoing training of our personnel, to our fleet of trucks. We make sure that if it comes from us, it's safe for the consumer."

Brooks of H. Brooks' also points out his company's emphasis on food safety. "We've had our HACCP plan in place for years, which we constantly update," he says. "We had top ratings from ASI and all the other major food safety and security auditors, and we have additional measures in place that far exceed any governmental mandates."

J & J's Hannigan stresses the importance of the company's traceback system, and he points out that the company's attention to food safety and sanitation "is second to none." **pb**

Produce Companies Optimistic In Detroit



With a bevy of independent retailers and its close proximity to Canada, the Motor City is overcoming its challenges with a thriving produce business. **BY LISA WHITE**

Despite the impact of the struggling auto industry, record unemployment amongst its residents and a dwindling population, Detroit's produce business continues to flourish. Its central location and proximity to Canada have provided ample opportunities for wholesalers and distributors.

Although there have been a lack of retailers within the city limits, this may be about to change. Grand Rapids, MI-based Meijer Inc. is currently in talks to build a 190,000-square-foot store in Detroit.

Further proof of the produce industry's viability is the fact that the city's retailers and foodservice operations are serviced by two produce markets. The Detroit Terminal Market, built in 1929, currently has eight vendors. Its two long buildings are constructed in an 'H' formation and connected by a bridge. Originally designed around rail lines, it is now mostly serviced by trucks. "Unlike markets in many cities today, we are still a true terminal market," says Philip Riggio, Jr., treasurer of Aunt Mids Produce Co., which has been doing business on the terminal for 62 years.

"Even Chicago's terminal market isn't the same as it used to be, since many companies have branched off and left."

About 10 miles north of this area is the city's Eastern Market, which opened in 1891. Open to the public on Saturdays, this six-

block operation has more than 250 vendors, including area farmers.

A Unique Market

Ben B. Schwartz & Sons Inc. has been doing business in Detroit's Terminal Market since 1906. The full-service wholesaler mainly services area retailers, in addition to foodservice operations. "Foodservice giants like U.S. Foodservice and Sysco do their own buying, but sometimes fill in with us," says Kyle Stone, head of food safety and technology at Ben B. Schwartz.



Westborn Market supports locally grown produce, which also provides value for cash-strapped consumers.

Photo courtesy of Westborn Market

The Detroit Terminal Market's proximity to areas such as Ontario and Windsor, Canada, as well as Ohio, have given business a boost due to retailers' migration out of the city limits. "Retailers have slowly left the city for outlying locations where there are more customers," Stone reports "There really aren't many inner city stores. Supermarkets are looking for a return on investment and from a business standpoint, they will get a better return in the suburbs."

Fred Misuraca, president of Royal Banana Co. Inc., also located in Detroit's Terminal Market, discloses the lack of inner city stores is nothing new. "The city still has stores, but the larger operations that do heavy volume are now located outside of the city."

Even before the decline of the auto industry, Detroit's population was smaller than most large cities. While the surrounding suburbs currently number about 4 million, there are only about 800,000 people living within Detroit city limits.

"The myth of there being no supermarkets in the city is disturbing to us. We have customers that drive from Toledo, OH, Ann Arbor and Flint, MI; and Canada, too."

— Brian Dubrinsky
E&L Supermercado

Despite its struggling economy, Detroit thrives on independent markets. "We have bigger chains, like Meijer and Kroger, but independents remain strong and are growing," Riggio says. Independents have helped Aunt Mids grow from a 16-employee company to a business that now employs 150. Currently, many of its customers are from Canada. "This is because the Toronto Produce Market deals with Canadian stores that are looking for smaller fruit, [while we offer larger-sized produce]," he adds.

A wholesaler and processor, Aunt Mids sells 350 items. The company recently renovated its processing plant, which is now

200,000 square feet. "We have our own label, and this is what sets us apart," remarks Riggio. "Also, foodservice is relatively new for us in the past 10 years."

Riggio attributes much of Aunt Mids' business to the area's significant Iraqi population, which consumes large amounts of fruits and vegetables. "Many are not aware that Dearborn, MI, has the second largest Middle Eastern community after the Middle East," Schwartz & Sons' Stone reveals. "And we have Mexicantown, too, which is located

three miles west of the produce terminal."

Located in Detroit with a single store, E&L Supermercado, a family-owned supermarket that has been in business for 65 years, draws customers from more than 200 cities in the metro area. "The myth of there being no supermarkets in the city is disturbing to us," says Brian Dubrinsky, produce manager/buyer. "We have customers that drive from Toledo, OH; Ann Arbor and Flint, MI; and Canada, too."

The store benefits from its proximity to the

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terminal and Eastern produce markets, but has had to contend with a decrease in Hispanic buyers. "This demographic is negatively affected by the immigration laws as well as the economy," Dubrinsky explains. "But being in the inner city has been great for us. We've been able to expand our business, and we are able to employ 90 people from southwest Detroit, which is a depressed area."

Like many of the area's wholesalers, Rocky Produce Inc., which has been in the terminal market since 1957, services a broad demo-

graphic. "The Detroit region has a wide range of ethnically diverse communities that consume a lot of produce," contends Dominic Russo, who manages sales and procurement.

Another independent retailer, Westborn Market, a 3-unit chain based in Berkeley, MI, buys its produce from the terminal and Eastern market seven days a week. "What differentiates us from chains like Costco, Sam's Club, Wal-Mart and Kroger is that we purchase our produce daily," asserts Bob Harding, the market's produce director and

terminal market buyer. "Chain stores mostly buy direct."

"Because of the current climate, particularly in Michigan, which has the highest unemployment rate in the nation, our focus is on providing value for customers."

— Bob Harding
Westborn Market

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Area Trends

Many of the Detroit region's produce trends mirror those in the rest of the country. For example, there is increasing interest in organic produce. "The organic industry is growing, and we are a big supplier of these items," says Riggio of Aunt Mids. "It seems like it leveled off when the economy took a hit, but now we're seeing growing interest in organic carrots, potatoes, romaine hearts and salad items."

Locally grown produce also has been on the upswing in the city and surrounding suburbs. "We are huge supporters of local growers," Harding says. "It's important to support the local economy." Signage in Westborn Market stores identifies locally grown items.

"It's not just produce from Michigan, but also Ohio, Indiana and the entire Midwest region that is popular with our customers," Riggio notes. "People want to know what they're eating and where it came from."

With the industry's increased focus on food safety, many companies in the region are revamping their testing programs. To prevent foodborne pathogens, Aunt Mids uses incubators to test and hold its produce prior to shipping.

Two years ago, Royal Banana instituted a HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point) plan after a request from a service customer. "We have third-party audits, which we've excelled at," Misuraca says. "We all have to get on board in terms of traceability."

Despite the struggling economy, area buyers are seeking larger-sized, high-quality produce. "There's more interest in nine-count



Photo courtesy of Aunt Mids

Aunt Mid's produce executives attribute their brisk business to a large ethnic population, which consumes a great deal of fresh produce.

cauliflowers and cantaloupe instead of 12-count," Riggio reports.

With the Detroit region's diverse demographic, ethnic produce also is a strong seller. "We do a lot of business with fava beans and mini cucumbers," reports Stone of Schwartz & Sons.

At press time, berries were Rocky Produce's most profitable program. "Produce trends depend on the market and time of year," Russo says. "Right now, we're heavily into stone fruit. Michigan homegrown produce always sells well, and we continue to push it."

Unlike its name suggests, Royal Banana has branched off from its main item and does big business in cantaloupes, honeydews, apples, oranges and lemons. "A lot of stores, due to the economy, are looking for value," Misuraca explains. "It used to be retailers sought the best produce they could buy, but now, value plays a big part in the buying decision."

Another terminal market wholesaler, Andrews Brothers Inc., also has seen more retail and foodservice customers seeking value. "When produce is at its peak in terms of quality and priced reasonably, retailers and consumers take advantage of it," says Jeff Abrash, owner and president. "Because everyone on the market is competing for the same business, there is a tremendous source of supply."

Produce from overseas also has received a good response in Detroit. "A new offshore cantaloupe from Costa Rica and Honduras last winter was a hit," says Westborn's Harding. "It only had a very small window of availability,

but sales exploded. We are always looking for different products that our customers can try." For example, two years ago, Westborn Market hooked up with a grower of hothouse raspberries, which was an exclusive for the chain during Christmas.

The diverse demographic also has created a strong produce market for foodservice. "Mediterranean restaurants do well with produce," says Eddie Isayev, owner of Brooklyn, NY-based Eddie's Produce Express, which also does business in Detroit and Canada. The company specializes in tomatoes and pep-

pers. "There are all types of people living in this area, which makes business very good."

The Challenges

Like every city, Detroit has its share of challenges. "We fight the economy, but we're making deals when we need to, and things continue to go well," says Russo of Rocky Produce. The company recently added a salesperson to help expand its foodservice business. "We are a distributor to foodservice wholesalers, and there is a lot of growth in this segment," he adds. The company also has added

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Detroit Market Share Information

COMPANY	TRADE NAMES	TOTAL Area Stores	CURRENT Market Share
The Kroger Co.: CINCINNATI, OH	Kroger	91	26.2
Meijer Inc.: GRAND RAPIDS, MI	Meijer	35	20.4
Costco Wholesale Corp.: ISSAQUAH, WA	Costco Wholesale	9	10.5
Walmart Stores Inc.: BENTONVILLE, AR	Walmart Supercenter	15	9.0
Sam's Club: BENTONVILLE, AR	Sam's Club	11	6.8
SUPERVALU Inc.: EDEN PRAIRIE, MN	Save-A-Lot	19	3.2
GFS Marketplace: GRAND RAPIDS, MI	GFS Marketplace	17	2.3
Aldi Inc.: BATAVIA, IL	Aldi	26	2.0
Hiller Inc.: SOUTHFIELD, MI	Hiller's Market	6	2.0
Spartan Stores: BYRON CENTER, MI	Family Fare Supermarkets; VG's Food Center & Pharmacy	8	1.5
Busch's Fresh Food Market: ANN ARBOR, MI	Busch's	8	1.4
Hollywood Super Markets Inc.: TROY, MI	Hollywood Supermarket	7	1.3
Trader Joe's Co.: MONROVIA, CA	Trader Joe's	5	1.2
Kmart: HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL	Super Kmart	6	1.2
Whole Foods Market Inc.: AUSTIN, TX	Whole Foods Market	3	1.1
Oak Ridge Markets: WARREN, MI	Oak Ridge Market	4	0.6
Saturn Food Center: DEARBORN HEIGHTS, MI	Hartheart Land Marketplace; Sack & Save; Saturn Food Center; Saturn Super Foods	5	0.6
Ivanhoe Inc.: LIVONIA, MI	Value Center Market	3	0.4
Shoppers Market: CENTER LINE, MI	Shoppers Market	3	0.4
Haug Corporation: MINNETONKA, MN	Cub Foods	2	0.8
J & L Enterprises Inc.: CHASKA, MN	Cooper's County Market; Cooper's SuperValu	3	0.6
Johannesson's Inc.: BEMIDJI, MN	Marketplace Foods	2	0.5
County Market: ANDOVER, MN	County Market	2	0.5
Radermacher Foods Inc.: JORDAN, MN	Cub Foods; Radermacher's Fresh Market	2	0.4
Other operations		386	8.1

Data courtesy of Chain Store Guide, Tampa, FL

more items geared toward restaurants and foodservice operations to its offerings. "No matter what condition the economy is in, those that offer the best quality and well-known labels at a reasonable price will build a solid foundation," he continues. "That's the nature of the business."

Keeping on top of changes and partnering with customers also are key to overcoming the challenges. "Our customers are working hard by changing the way they do things to generate new business, and we are there to partner with them and support them in their cause to stay profitable," Russo says. "We will change programs and test new ones to accommodate them."

Detroit-area companies are remaining positive, despite selling to a shrinking population that has fewer disposable dollars. "It's more important than ever to be right on the quality and price. There is no margin for error," acknowledges Abrash. "When prices start to spike on an item, we see more resistance now, and that's partly an economic issue. We have to be on our best game."

Like the rest of the country, transportation continues to be a challenge. "These high freight rates are affecting prices on items like

table grapes and clementines," Schwartz & Sons' Stone says. "It's getting more difficult to offer sale prices."

For stores located between Detroit and Chicago, it's cheaper to buy from Chicago, which is still a big train outlet. "The advantage is trucks know that they have to compete with rail rates and are discounting rates as much as \$1,500," reports Riggio of Aunt Mids.

Transportation is an issue for retailers like Westborn Market, as well. "We are paying high freight rates, but West Coast freight charges are nothing compared to the East Coast," Harding says. "Boston is paying way more for trucks."

Along with increased cost, availability of trucks can be an issue. "Sometimes there aren't enough trucks available, especially during the holidays," admits E & L Supermercado's Dubinsky. "We can be days off target for deliveries. With increased prices, sometimes freight costs from California are more than the merchandise."

Competition within the terminal also has increased. When the market was first instituted, businesses were less diversified. While one company was known for its tomatoes, another was sought after for bananas. Today, there is a

lot of overlap, since most of these businesses tend to be one-stop shops. "There has been increasing competition for the same business," Stone says. "This has been a significant change over the years."

In response to the economy, Westborn Market has lowered its pricing dramatically in the last year. "Because of the current climate, particularly in Michigan, which has the highest unemployment rate in the nation, our focus is on providing value for customers," Harding says. "The economics in this country make doing business challenging, but retailers everywhere are facing this."

Despite the obstacles, Detroit produce companies are optimistic about the future. "We're proud of the Detroit produce industry," asserts Abrash of Andrews Brothers. "Retailers and foodservice customers support the terminal. We have a competitive market that brings in a wide variety of produce from around the world."

Many contend that, when it comes to produce in Detroit, the best is yet to come. "I feel we haven't even scratched the surface," Russo says. "Detroit is a great area, despite what the media portrays. This city is a great place to live and run a business."

pb

Peruvian Onions Hold Their Own

Peruvian onions are proving they are much more than simply a stand-in for Vidalias.

BY JULIE COOK RAMIREZ

As long, hot summer days give way to the crisp, cool feel of fall, trips to the beach and family vacations aren't the only things to go by the wayside.

U.S.-grown sweet onions fall off tremendously, as both Vidalia and Walla Walla onions supplies run out. That has the potential to leave onion suppliers in quite a bind, as American consumers have come to expect sweet, succulent onions at their local grocer year-round.

"Consumers love sweet onions," says Barry Rogers, president of Sweet Onion Trading Corp., in Melbourne, FL. "They love the versatility. You can cook with it or not cook with it. You can cut it up without crying. People notice that. That's why they continue to displace hot yellow onions more and more every day."

So what's a retailer to do when American sweet onion supplies dry up? Enter the Peruvian onion, a short-day onion that picks up where Vidalias and Walla Wallas leave off. Historically, Peruvian onions

have been utilized to help transition the U.S. crop to South American onions, thus allowing retailers to maintain a steady supply of sweet onions year-round. "The Peruvian onion harvest is timed perfectly with the end of Vidalia season in August," says John Shuman, president and director of sales at Shuman Produce Inc., in Reidsville, GA. "The growing season in Peru allows us to plant two crops, which provides consistent supply during the fall and winter."

Not only is the timing right, but the Peruvian onion crop is right on target in terms of appearance and taste. According to most onion importers and retailers, the vast majority of consumers would never know the difference between a Peruvian onion and a Vidalia — were it not for the country-of-origin laws, of course. However, there are those who claim there are subtle differences between Peruvian-grown and America-grown sweet onions. This is especially true among onion connoisseurs. "The majority of people see them as just another sweet onion, but for the people who really do the sweets, there's a distinct difference in the taste," says Margret DeBruyn, president of DeBruyn Produce Co., located in Welasco, TX. "I've heard people say, 'I was at the store looking for sweet onions and I got these from Peru and they are amazing.'"

DeBruyn Produce has been importing Peruvian onions for the past 15 years. Following the death of Margret's father and predecessor, Robert DeBruyn, this past year, the company actually considered discontinuing its Peruvian onion line. DeBruyn went so far as to "pull back for a little while," but it quickly became evident that Peruvians play a "substantial role" in enabling DeBruyn to supply retailers with sweet onions for literally half of the year.

"We've come to recognize it's an important part of our line of business," admits DeBruyn. "It allows us to continue having the sweet product, while at the same time, utilizing storage onions as well."

Likewise, Kurt Schweitzer, president of Keystone Fruit Marketing Inc., in Greencastle, PA, describes



The Peruvian onion harvest is timed perfectly to coincide with the end of Vidalia season in August.

Peruvian onions as “very important in our year-round program.” According to Schweitzer, his company started the Peruvian onion industry in the United States in 1992 with its Mayan Sweets brand. From the very beginning, he says, Keystone sought to ensure that Peruvian onions met consumer expectations for a sweet onion. That led the company to have its onions certified as suitably sweet by Collins, GA-based National Onion Labs Inc. Schweitzer says such actions have led credibility and credence to Peruvian onions and helped grow the industry.

“Just like a good bottle of wine that can change by the vintage, the onion will change from year to year, but within the growing districts, you have to have very consistent cultural practices that produce the sweetest onions,” says Schweitzer. “It’s not just a sweetness standard, it’s a flavor profile, and that’s an important thing from a consumer standpoint.”

SWEET AND GROWING

Between 2003 and 2007, Peruvian onion exports grew 95.9 percent, reaching \$22.2 million during the 2007-08 season. The United States is by far the primary destination for Peruvian onions, receiving approximately 86 percent of exported crops in 2007. Keystone reports ongoing sales increases of 10 to 14 percent each year for its Peruvian onions, according to Schweitzer.

Such incredible growth is largely attributed to the United States-Peru Trade Promotion Agreement signed on April 12, 2006, and implemented on February 1, 2009. That does not mean everyone is pleased with the direction the industry is headed, however. The Washington D.C.-based Food & Water Watch took aim at the Agreement in 2007, alleging that it threatened the livelihoods of U.S. onion farmers. Claiming the agreement was based on “the same flawed agriculture policies that have already threatened U.S. tomato, bell pepper and cucumber growers under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA),” the group urged people to petition Congress to vote “no” on the agreement.

For the most part, onion suppliers dismiss such efforts out-of-hand. “I wouldn’t pay too much attention to (them),” says Derrell Kelso Jr., owner and president of Onions Etc. Inc., in Stockton, CA, adding that he feels such groups “have no clue” about what’s really going on in the market.

Chris Woo, onion sales manager for Idaho/Oregon territories at Idaho Falls, ID-based Potandon Produce LLC, which acts as a sales agent for Ontario, OR-based Murakami Produce Co. LLC, tends to disagree. “Sweet onions from outside the United States get in the way of our national overall

onion market share,” he says. Still, he admits that Peruvian onions “fill a niche for people who want sweet onions that can’t be offered domestically during that time. There is adequate U.S.-grown product available, but not enough sweet ones.”

Delbert Bland, president and CEO of Glennville, GA-based Bland Farms LLC, firmly believes that groups like Food & Water Watch don’t have a valid point, concluding, “they’re just talking.” He points out that Peruvian sweets are a different kind of onion than that which is grown in the Northwest during the winter months.

Admittedly, technological developments are lengthening the season of U.S. sweet onion varieties, and thus shortening the import window for Peruvians, according to Matt Curry, president of Curry & Co. Inc., in Brooks, OR. As the United States continues to develop and expand domestic sweet onion programs, he feels the market will dictate the need for imported onions. “The challenge lies in timing the Peruvian crop with the U.S. crop,” he explains. “We want to make the transition at the right time so we can maximize the returns for our U.S. onion growers and make sure we have solid business in place for imports.”

GREAT PRETENDERS

In most instances, consumers can’t tell the difference between Vidalias and Peruvians, according to Bland. That is because they are basically the same onion, planted using the same exact seed, simply in a different growing environment. From September through February, Bland imports Peruvian onions, which are grown 20 kilometers inland from the Pacific Ocean in predominately desert to near-desert conditions. Irrigated by snowmelt coming off the Andes Mountains, the setting in which these onions grow couldn’t be more picturesque.

Peru’s dry climate makes it an ideal growing environment, resulting in a remarkably appealing onion that literally sells itself, according to Brian Kastick, president and general manager of Oso Sweet, in Charleston, WV. He describes Peruvian onions as his company’s “anchor product for the fall. They have a very mild, sweet taste and a pretty finish because you don’t have some of the issues that come with a heavier clay soil,” he explains. “You have a clean, bright-appearing onion that’s really appealing to consumers.”

The ability to control the amount of water that reaches the onions also mitigates the likelihood they are going to be affected by some of the diseases that are common in onion crops grown in South Texas or Georgia, adds Kastick. Still, Oso Sweet employs

Between 2003 and 2007, Peruvian onion exports grew 95.9 percent, reaching \$22.2 million during the 2007-08 season. The United States is by far the primary destination for Peruvian onions, receiving approximately 86 percent of exported crops in 2007.

plant pathologists who keep an eye on the onions for any sign of disease.

By their very nature, onions are less likely to fall prey to disease or infestation, says DeBruyn of DeBruyn Produce, due to the relatively simple growing and harvesting process and the fact that they are not routinely washed or misted. “Onions, if treated well, are probably a heartier commodity and less susceptible in terms of some of the food safety issues,” says DeBruyn. “If there’s moisture, you might get some black mold, but you are not apt to have a bug or bacteria growing in or on the onion.”

Still, with concerns over food safety at an all-time high, some consumers are understandably leery of imported produce, believing that growers in other countries are not required to adhere to the same strict standards as U.S. farmers. The Trade Center of the American Chamber of Commerce in Peru (AmCham Peru) has acknowledged that food safety concerns are growing in the United States and that implementation of GAP standards is increasingly important. Yet, American importers of Peruvian onions have no complaints. They say Peruvian crops have a positive reputation in the United States, and food safety considerations are handled appropriately. What’s more, consumers are savvy enough to realize that they have to turn to imports if they want year-round access to sweet onions, says Mike Maguire, director of produce operations for Demoulas/Market Basket Inc., a 65-store chain based in Tewksbury, MA.

According to Oso Sweet’s Kastick, Peru-

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vian growers recognize how much is at stake and that food safety in the country is cutting-edge. "They take food safety seriously in Peru and they are serious about being exporters," he asserts. "They know that to export to U.S. or European markets, they can't just say, 'food safety is an issue.' It has to be the real deal."

What's more, Kastick notes, Peruvian growers not only meet the same standards as U.S. farmers, but exceed them. In fact, he reports that product coming out of South America is held to a much higher standard by the USDA than that which comes out of American pack houses. "The imported product undergoes a lot more scrutiny, as it should," he says. "There's almost no comparison."

Keystone's Schweitzer remarks consumer fears persist that imported produce is subject to unregulated sprays and pesticides. However, the industry — along with individual importers — has done a good job of chipping away at those fears. Keystone, for example, provides its retailers with information on the company's hand-harvesting and hand-packing, not to mention its ability to trace every onion back to the exact field where it was grown. Keystone's Peruvian onions also carry GlobalGAP certification and are certified pesticide-free. According to Schweitzer, several of Keystone's customers promote that fact by having that information printed on the bag and on in-store signage. "People look at the bag and see 'Product of Peru' and wonder how we grow it," he says. "This is a great opportunity to get that message across to the consumer."

Likewise, Shuman partners with Harvest-Mark for a traceability platform that provides instant access to harvest, distribution, quality and food safety information. The company also promotes the fact that it received a 4-star rating from Primus Labs' certification program in Peru. As Shuman explains, "We want our customers to know that all the onions they buy from us — whether they are from Peru, Mexico, California, Texas, or Vidalia — are safe." Still, not everyone is buying the claim that imported produce is on par with American crops.

"We, as a U.S. supplier, do not compete on a level and fair playing field with offshore cheap labor, lack of food safety programs, unknown chemicals and pesticide usage and underage child labor," says Potandon's Woo.

RAISING THE BAR

Not only have Peruvian onions met U.S. consumers' expectations for safety, Rogers of Sweet Onion Trading Co. says their quality has proven so high, it actually forced U.S. growers to improve the quality of their



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sweet onions. "Peru came into the market back when there wasn't a serious standard for sweet onions," he says. "The onion community was never happy with the quality, and then Peru came in with their bright, shiny, finished onions and totally changed what was accepted in the industry. The domestic sweets had to raise the bar."

The vast majority of Peruvian onions imported into the United States end up in retail, rather than foodservice. The rationale is simple, as Bland of Bland Farms explains: "You don't get the tonnage out of them when you cut them up." Restaurateurs don't want that much waste, so they tend to steer clear of Peruvians.

Consumers, on the other hand, love them. While some suppliers and retailers look upon Peruvian onions as simply a seasonal substitute for Vidalias, others consider them a desirable product all on their own. As Rogers explains, "One man's replacement is another man's livelihood." Interest is so strong for Peruvian onions at Sweet Onion Trading Co. that Rogers reports shipping them to diehard fans or at least e-mailing a message to them to let them know when the onions will be hitting store produce departments.

According to Maguire, DeMoulas/Market Basket makes a conscious effort to identify

"They take food safety seriously in Peru and they are serious about being exporters. They know that to export to U.S. or European markets, they can't just say, 'food safety is an issue.' It has to be the real deal."

**— Brian Kastick
Oso Sweet Onions Inc.**

the onions as Peruvian in their ads and on their signage. The chain also makes use of POP materials provided by their Peruvian onion suppliers. Meanwhile, Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets Inc. advertises Peruvian onions regularly during the fall and

winter months, tying in companion items and recipes that incorporate Peruvians into the mix, according to Maria Brous, director of media and community relations. Onion suppliers like Bland have been known to develop their own marketing strategies, such as a tri-wall Peruvian onion bin, which markets kits to make blooming onions.

Such marketing efforts will help retailers and consumers alike to be on the lookout for what Oso Sweet's Kastick calls "imposter sweets" — that is, U.S.-grown mild or hot onions with a "sweet" sticker slapped on them in an attempt to fool the buyer. "They confuse the consumer because they go home, they cook with it, they eat it, but it isn't a sweet onion — and they realize that," he emphasizes. "With a Peruvian onion, they are going to go home and be satisfied that they got what they expected."

When it comes to Peruvians, onion suppliers agree it's up to retailers to sell as many as they want. As Shuman explains, it's all in the planning, promotions, quality and timing. "Properly displayed and merchandised, Peruvian sweet onions will grow your category during the fall and winter and keep your customers coming back again and again," he remarks. "It's simply the best onion available during its production window."

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The Changing Tide Of Transportation

Still recovering from the economic slump and facing tighter government regulations, transportation companies find new ways to keep customers happy.

BY JON VANZILE

The recession may be technically over, but its effects continue to linger in the transportation sector of the produce business.

Over the past few years, freight rates have been highly volatile, even as fuel has been relatively stable. Not too long ago in the recent past, freight rates cratered compared to fuel prices, and the shipping business was hit hard. Many carriers went out of business, while others consolidated.

Freight rates have recovered somewhat since those days, but the trucking and transportation business is still dealing with the after-shocks — and in some ways, the recent market volatility may have changed the business forever.



While rail shipping is generally limited to harder good such as onions and potatoes, Railex's trains can handle stonefruit, melons and baby carrots.

"Three years ago, when fuel was around \$3 per gallon, we were getting \$2 to \$3 less per load, compared to now when fuel is once again around \$3 per gallon," says Fred Plotsky, president of Cool Runnings in Kenosha, WI. "The downturn hit in November, 2008, when everything just hit a wall and guys were fighting each other. We really haven't recovered from that yet."

FEWER TRUCKS ON THE ROAD

Over-the-road transportation is an early indicator of national economic activity, so the recent increases in freight rates can be viewed as a positive indicator of a nascent U.S. recovery. "Transportation in general is a key indicator of the economy," asserts Rob Goldstein, owner and president of Genpro Inc., headquartered in Rutherford, NJ. "It equals spending."

But the rise in freight rates is still too new, and still too shallow, to really offset one major consequence of the recent collapse — a scarcity of refrigerator trucks in major markets. In fact, when a cross-section of carriers and brokers was asked to identify the major issue facing the industry right now, the answer was unanimous: fewer trucks on the road. "The increase [in freight rates] is based on variables such as fewer trucks on the road as a result of the recession and increasing demand due to the economic recovery and higher expenses," explains Craig Cahill, director of perishable logistics at Allen Lund Co. Inc., in Wakefield, MA.

But restricted truck supply and fuel rates aren't the only factors at play. In fact, the correlation between freight rates and fuel prices is still strong, but it is weaker than it was prior to the economic collapse. This isn't thanks to the recession as much as it is thanks to historically high fuel prices in the mid-2000s, much of it caused by uncertainty in the global oil market. In those days, fuel surcharges became common, but they haven't gone away even though fuel prices have dropped. According to Cahill, even after fuel charges drifted

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back down, the fuel surcharge has become a "standard line item" cost. As a result, larger carriers can still pass along the cost of fuel. Still, that was little consolation to smaller carriers who suffered from a complex business environment during the recession, only part of which was caused by a gap between fuel prices and freight rates.

"A lot of guys went out of business last year," points out Tristan Schmit, vice president of Eclipse Dist., in Shorewood, IL. "There's a lot of demand because of a shortage of trucks."

INCREASED REGULATION

If freight rates have been somewhat divorced from the cost of fuel, carriers and truck brokers alike complain that increased regulation and insurance costs are eating into margins and driving up costs for shippers. They say this is a major reason freight rates are increasing again.

In California, especially, state regulators are pushing a set of regulations known as CARB, the acronym for the California Air Resources Board. This complex set of regulations is aimed at reducing emissions and the overall carbon footprint of the trucking industry, but it poses a significant burden on trucking companies operating in California. And since California is the largest agricultural market in the country, it has an oversized effect throughout the rest of the country.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Transportation is readying the CSA2010, or Comprehensive Safety Analysis 2010. Scheduled to be rolled out in 2011, the CSA2010 will include a bundle of rules and regulations designed to reduce roadway fatalities and accidents caused by buses and large trucks. These more stringent regulations and government oversight represent an added cost for trucking companies.

Already struggling with extreme market volatility, carriers and brokers are united in opposition to new regulations that will likely drive up the cost of freight without increasing their own bottom lines. "The biggest variable out there now is the trend toward overzealous government regulation," emphasizes Cahill of Allen Lund. "Competition is healthy, and supply and demand is an effective regulator. With all of the turbulence experienced over the past couple of years, basic economic principles should be given an opportunity to work."

Schmit at Eclipse echoes this sentiment, pointing out that the new California regulations will have a negative effect on rates of refrigerator trucks and shipping throughout the western states.

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**— Craig Cahill
Allen Lund Co. Inc.**

Insurance, too, has become more expensive, with rates rapidly increasing and some large shippers requesting insurance increases from their carriers.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION AND THE REBOUND

Despite these added costs — or perhaps because of them — many expect to see freight rates continue to increase in the coming months as carriers seek to improve profitability. A rapid increase in fuel costs would no doubt cause a spike in freight rates. Such increases will be driven by the oldest forces known in a free market: increased demand and decreased supply.

"Now that freight rates have come around and freight is stronger, you can start to ask for increases," said Plotsky of Cool Runnings.

The rapid pace of innovation is also expected to put upward pressure on freight rates as carriers invest in their information infrastructure. The produce shipping and distribution industry is automating at many levels, and many trucking companies are

"Long-haul produce in this country should move by rail. It's environmentally sound. According to the EPA, our train reduces CO2 emissions by 8,500 metric CO2 equivalents per year, per train. And we have four trains."

**— Paul Esposito
Railex LLC**

moving toward an Internet-based electronic data exchange — if they haven't adopted it already.

From a shipper's point of view, this can be a good thing because it allows real-time data regarding produce shipments. By logging in, shippers can see exactly where their cargo is and get a better idea of its delivery date. This allows for more precise product turn, similar to the "just-in-time" method of operation at manufacturing facilities where parts are delivered only as they're needed.

But this kind of investment is expensive. "Technological advances are a tremendous resource," remarks Allen Lund's Cahill. "Information can be tendered, routed, scheduled, tracked and traced electronically. But it takes knowledgeable professionals at every level of the supply chain communicating effectively... Experienced drivers equipped with knowledge and technology are a tremendous resource."

In other words, automation at the transportation level is more labor intensive and requires drivers who are trained in the software and procedures. As a result, notes Plot-sky, the big carriers are the early adopters of Internet-based technology systems.

The industry's movement toward automation is also dependent on the pace of the economic recovery. If the recovery sputters, which still remains a very real possibility, most carriers are expected to tighten their belts and hold on for another period of reduced business activity. If, however,

demand continues to increase and the recovery accelerates, shippers may become less price-sensitive and start to shop on truck availability, service, and delivery. "The confidence the transportation industry has in the recovery will drive the pace of investment in new equipment," says Cahill.

THE RAIL OPTION

Even with a reduced number of trucks on the road, the vast majority of produce is still shipped over the road as opposed to by rail. Most produce is simply too fragile to withstand long rail-shipping times, with the

exception of a few hardier goods such as onions, potatoes and apples.

One company, however, hopes to change that. Railex LLC, based in Riverhead, NY, is busy trying to expand its coast-to-coast rail service to include more traditionally perishable commodities. According to Railex executives, the service can do this because it offers something most rail services don't: reliability and speed.

In fact, Railex's senior vice president, Paul Esposito, reports the company promises 5-day cross-country service on the company's scheduled service from Washington



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Photo courtesy of Railex LLC

Railex has cold storage facilities on the East Coast, which allow shippers to store product for a limited time before its picked up by short-haul carriers.

and California to distribution facilities on the East Coast. "We're getting more sensitive commodities," Esposito says. "We don't get berries and herbs, but we can do stone fruit, melons, baby carrots and nursery stock."

Including pick-up and drop-off, Esposito reports total transit time is typically seven days to cross the country. Railex can accomplish this because it uses contract trains, handles all the switching itself and runs regularly scheduled service. "We are coming across the country in a little less than 30

mph on average, which is kind of amazing," Esposito states. "In rural areas, we can average 60 mph or 70 mph. A team truck can do the crossing in three days, but a regular driver takes about five days."

Railex also has cold storage facilities on the East Coast where shippers can store product for a limited time before short-haul carriers pick up the product for delivery, thus using the Railex facility as a kind of freelance distribution warehouse.

So far, Railex is still in growth mode —

the company has been active in Washington for four years and moved into California two years ago. In Washington, Railex is maintaining low-double-digit revenue growth, while the California business is growing at a blistering 45 percent annually.

According to Esposito, Railex offers several advantages over traditional trucking, including a greatly reduced carbon footprint. "Long-haul produce in this country should move by rail," Esposito says. "It's environmentally sound. According to the EPA, our train reduces CO2 emissions by 8,500 metric CO2 equivalents per year, per train. And we have four trains."

The downside so far is the transportation rate. Railex has a much higher capital overhead than over-the-road trucking companies. Esposito estimates the company had invested \$100 million in infrastructure. As a result, Railex rates are competitive with the intermodal shipping industry, and their competitiveness with over-the-road trucks depends on fuel rates.

"Trucks have a much lower cellar than we do," Esposito admits. "Reefer trucks can go much lower than we can." As a result, Railex tries to "sell on platform," including more precise temperature control, short-term warehousing at the East Coast distribution facility and other built-in advantages. "People realize they need to find an alternative to trucks, but as long as truck rates stay affordable, they aren't going to look to change," Esposito says. **pb**

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Questions For The Potato Merchandiser

The potato, perhaps one of the most overlooked commodities in the produce department, offers consistent sales and margins. With this in mind, perhaps it is time to re-evaluate retail merchandising of the potato category by asking some specific questions.

BY BRYANT WYNES

Let's face it. Compared to all the vibrant, colorful and sometimes exotic fruits and vegetables spilling out from displays and racks throughout the produce department, the common potato looks, well, pretty common. "Overall, the category is not perceived as exciting or 'sexy,'" says Mac Johnson, president and CEO of Category Partners LLC, in Aurora, CO. "Often it is a stepchild. Not much is done to create and maintain excitement within the category."

Many suppliers in the industry echo this sentiment. Johnson, whose company provides marketing services for distributor Wada Farms in Idaho Falls, ID, sees this as a basic hurdle standing in the way of maximizing sales and profits from the category. "Given potatoes' contribution to department sales, the category is often neglected in promotions and merchandising," he laments.

Tim Feit, director of promotions and consumer education at the Antigo-based Wisconsin Potato & Vegetable Growers' Association (WPVGA), agrees. "Potatoes aren't bright and colorful, like an apple or pepper; they're not glamorous."

The facts are, however, that potatoes deserve more respect than they might be getting. According to Don Ladhoff, director of retail programs for the Denver, CO-based United States Potato Board (USPB), potatoes account for 1.2 percent of total supermarket dollar sales (\$6.7B). Fresh potatoes are the third largest vegetable category in dollar sales, and the undisputed No. 1 in volume, growing nearly 5 percent over the past year.

WHAT IS THE OPTIMUM CATEGORY DISPLAY SIZE?

As expected, there is no firm size guide-



The United States Potato Board's Best Practices recommends stocking a selection of potatoes spanning all five potato subcategories.

line. "Every commodity group will tell you a large display will sell more of its produce," asserts Ted Kreis, marketing director of the East Grand Forks, MN-based Northern Plains Potato Growers Association (NPPGA). "But you need to take a common sense approach." As with other produce department commodities, Kreis recommends that retailers consider the popularity of the item, shelf-life, refrigeration needs and profit margin. "When you look at those criteria for potatoes, it only makes sense to be generous with the display size," he says. He notes that potatoes are the most popular vegetable in the produce department, bought by 90 percent of all consumers, so they have good turnover. Compared with other fresh produce items, they have a long shelf-life, even without refrigeration. "And, when promoted, they generate a nice profit margin," he adds.

Johnson and others note that there is no hard and fast rule. "There are so many variables to consider," he remarks. "Store size, store format, rural vs. center city, East Coast vs. West Coast — they all impact the space that should be allocated to potatoes."

The USPB, which maintains an ongoing Best Practices study, recommends that the potato display should account for approximately 10 percent of the produce department space. It notes that when creating the display, store demographics, seasonality and sales should also be considered.

Johnson adds that sufficient space should be allocated to provide consumers with a good selection of both bulk and bagged potatoes — and in multiple bag sizes. "Limited space," he says, "tends to either limit offerings or forces retailers to stack potatoes too high, which can cause rotation issues and



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Category Partners' Johnson believes that an "ideal" set will offer bulk russets, golds and reds, then provide anywhere from five to 10 packaged items as space allows, ranging from 10-pound russets for the 'value' shopper to the specialty potatoes. "Originally we saw fingerlings, purples and organics as novelty items," he says, "but they are becoming more

— Jim Richter
Wilcox Fresh

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accepted by a wider group of customers and have a role in the category mix."

Jennifer Campuzano, account manager with West Dundee, IL-based Perishables Group, works with the USBP on tracking Best Practices. Regardless of the varieties in the set, she suggests that retailers pay specific attention to how potatoes are merchandised within the traffic flow of the store and department. "Higher margin items, such as value-added, premium and specialty potatoes, should be first in consumer traffic flow to take advantage of greater impulse sales potential," she maintains. "Shoppers will see these first and think 'Maybe I'll try this tonight.'"

WHAT IS THE PROPER MIX OF SIZES AND PACKAGING?

The first question often asked is "bulk or packaged?"

Here's how the numbers break down nationally: 5-lb. bags are the leader at 44 percent of all potato sales dollars (45 percent of volume). Bulk potatoes make up about 24 percent of all fresh potato sales dollars (and only 14 percent of volume share); 10-lb. bags follow at 16 percent in potato sales dollars (but a remarkable 31 percent of volume). The remaining 16 percent of dollar volume is spread among the various other sizes, including 1- to 3- and 8-lb. bags.

As with variety, a retailer's mix of packaging should vary. Opportunities exist for retailers who do a better job of merchandising to their various store locations and target customers, instead of using the same basic set in all stores. While not as easy as a one-size-fits-all layout, this will produce positive results.

USBP's Best Practices recommends stocking a selection of potatoes spanning all five potato subcategories. It urges retailers to keep sales share by sub-category in mind, and to consider shopper preferences, demographic location and subcategory growth trends.

The five sub-categories include: Bargain, which drives category volume, and includes 8-lb. bags or larger russet, white and yellow potatoes; Mainstream, which drives category dollars, and includes bulk and/or 4- to 5-lb. bags of A-size russets, whites, reds and yellows; Premium, which boosts gross margin, and includes A- and C-size bulk and/or bags that are three pounds or less of russets, reds, whites, yellows and other proprietary varieties; Specialty, which drives incremental dollars, and are any size bulk and/or 3-lb. or less bags of purple, gemstone, fingerlings and other unique varieties; and Value-added, which drives incremental dollars, and are any size bulk and/or 2-lb. or less bags of russets, reds, whites or yellows.

WILL VALUE-ADDED AND ORGANIC GROWTH CONTINUE?

Certainly, the individually wrapped, microwave-ready potatoes have found a place within the produce department. The newest value-added potatoes are the steam-in-bag or microwave bagged potatoes. This latest convenience product is designed to appeal to time-starved customers. Sizes vary between one or one-and-a-half pounds, and include reds, whites and russets. Cooking times vary, but are normally under 10 minutes. Because these items require no refrigeration, they can be displayed on the produce floor, along with other potato items. Some are available in shippers that make cross-promotion with other departments even easier.

Other new items, with seasoned, flavor-pellets are also available, but require refrigeration. "In addition to providing time-saving convenience, these new products can reach out and capture new market segments — maybe people who don't know much about cooking potatoes," explains Potandon's Schwartz. "The industry is finding new ways and products to increase potato consumption," he acknowledges, "but the challenge for retailers is that they will need to make room for these new products and varieties; they'll need to adjust their plan-o-grams."



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On the subject of organics, it appears that organic potatoes represent a fraction of the total category at only 1 percent. Potandon's Schwartz believes that the economy has had an impact on organic potato sales. "We were seeing growth, but it appears that the economy has become a factor in the organic potato business," he says.

The Perishables Group Campuzano believes that organics will continue to show improvement. "There is still interest among consumers in organics," he remarks. "When possible, we recommend to all retailers that they incorporate organic potatoes into the main potato display to meet the needs of these consumers."

WHAT CROSS-MARKETING SUGGESTIONS WORK WELL?

Consumers make 36 percent of fresh potato purchase decisions in store, and 41 percent of potato purchases occur on "quick trips," where consumers are only picking up a few items. This makes them a natural for cross-promotional activity. Most of the various state potato commissions, as well as the USPB, have created a variety of promotional programs, and are willing to assist interested retailers. Since the meat, seafood and prepared foods departments serve as meal inspiration areas for food shoppers, cross-merchandising fresh potatoes in these departments can spark meal ideas and create incremental sales.

"When you talk about cross-merchandising and cross-marketing, potatoes are an easy fit," says Category Partners' Johnson. "Those retailers utilizing cross-merchandising have found it very effective," he says, and reports that almost 40 percent of all dinners that include a center-of-the-plate protein also include potatoes. "That makes it simple to cross-merchandise with your in-house beef program or a rotisserie chicken."

Jim Richter, senior vice president of retail relations for Wilcox Fresh, headquartered in Rexburg, ID, agrees that potatoes are easy to work into secondary displays. "Refrigerated space is a valuable commodity in the supermarket. Potatoes are easy to merchandise and display in other departments because they don't require refrigeration," he points out. Richter suggests promotions with 4-packs of potatoes displayed next to steaks — and individually wrapped, microwave-ready potatoes in the deli next to rotisserie chickens.

"Even better," adds USPB's Ladhoff, "the purchase of potatoes can lead to the purchase of other products, too." He reports that a recent market basket study found that the overall basket ring was nearly twice the norm when fresh potatoes were present.

Ladhoff adds that potatoes are also a terrific flavor carrier, with a natural opportunity to cross-merchandise with many other products throughout the store, such as salsa, yogurt, cheese and herbs.

"It's no wonder that other products are looking to partner with potatoes in marketing efforts," declares Seth Pemsler, vice president of retail for the Eagle-based Idaho Potato Commission (IPC). "IRC, Mrs. Dash's and Fresh Gourmet have all worked with us to create effective retail promotions."

Perhaps the most basic of cross-promotions is to look no further than the potato

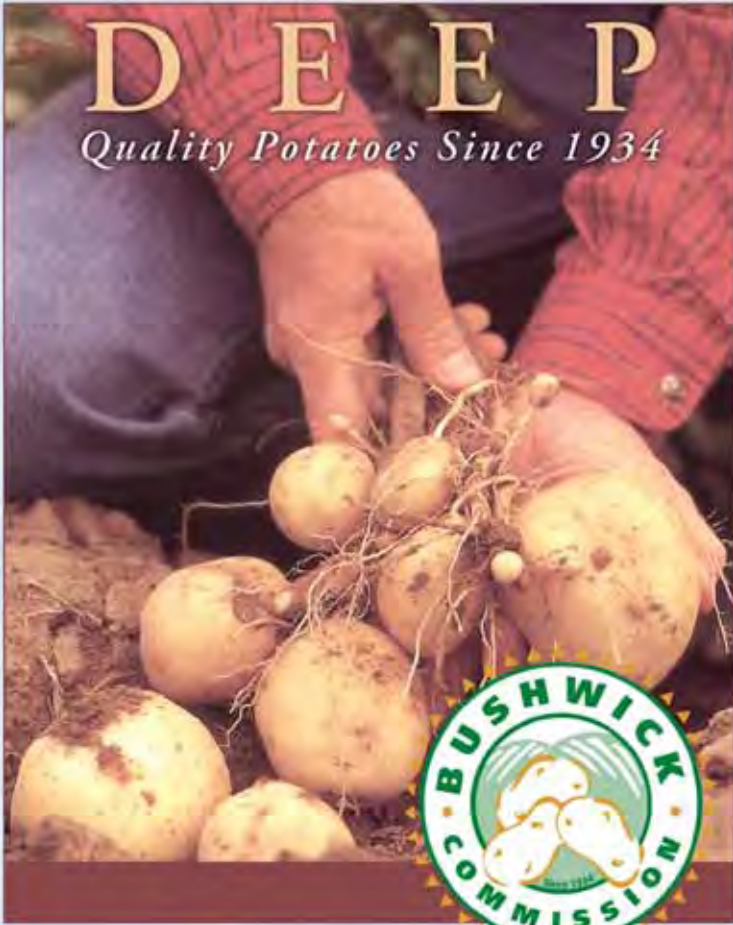

display itself. Potandon's Schwartz notes that onions and squash, normally merchandised alongside potatoes, are perfect complements. "We all know that this time of year (fall) brings a renewed interest in soups and stews, and potatoes are a natural," he says.

WHAT ARE SOME COOKING TRENDS THAT LEND THEMSELVES TO POTATO PURCHASES?

According to the USPB and Perishables Group, consumers continue to be time-starved and don't want to spend much time

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preparing or cooking meals. It's only natural that the usage of microwaves for preparing baked potatoes has grown 13 percent over the same period. Interest in the other microwave-ready potatoes previously mentioned will most likely increase as well.

As the economy continues to dominate promotional activity, Pemsler believes value will continue to drive sales. "Let's face it — potatoes are the best value in the produce department," he asserts.

Wilcox's Richter agrees that potatoes offer exceptional value. But beyond that, he maintains the current economy is driving a return to home-cooked meals. "There's no better 'comfort food' than potatoes," he says.

The trend toward locally grown produce hasn't been overlooked. Tommy Wilkins, director of produce procurement at United Supermarkets LLC, headquartered in Lubbock, TX, says that the chain of 30 stores has been very happy with locally grown potato promotions. "We've had fun with some Meet the Grower week-ends at our stores, bringing in the actual growers so our customers could see who is responsible for the potatoes we are selling," he states.

Consumers' interest in preparing healthful meal options for themselves and their families remains another key trend. "Potatoes are very nutritious," states USPB's Ladhoff. "A medium-size potato has 110 calories, is naturally fat-free, high in vitamin C and has more potassium than a banana." However, shopper communication about potato nutrition is key. Perishables Group studies found that only 1 in 6 shoppers know the facts about the nutritional benefits of potatoes; however, when they learn of them, 2 in 3 shoppers indicate that they are more

likely to purchase fresh potatoes in the future. This means that retailers can increase their sales significantly by utilizing their POS signage and circular ads to reinforce the benefits of potatoes.

Category Partners' Johnson agrees on this point. Whether it's microwave-ready or comfort food, he maintains that both the industry and retailers together have to communicate with consumers to educate them on the flavors, varieties and cooking options available with potatoes. "Offering recipes and ideas as well as nutrition information at the point-of-purchase would be a step in the right direction," he says.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES REMAIN?

Some, like Skagit's Corwin, focus on operation opportunities. "We need to be sure all retail produce associates are knowledgeable about the different potato varieties," he says. "Not all are equal." Corwin notes that handling and rotation for specialty potatoes are quite different than favorites like russets. "Potatoes store well, but they still require proper rotation to avoid unnecessary shrink."

WPGA's Feit thinks that part of the problem is that potato merchandising and display efforts continue to be an afterthought. "Potatoes aren't seen as a glamorous vegetable. We need to use variety to attract customer attention and get retail associates interested in proper merchandising and promotion."

Mike O'Brien, vice president of produce for Schnuck Markets Inc., based in St. Louis, MO, echoes Feit's opinions. "We have to quit looking at potatoes as just another commodity that we can use as a loss-leader," he

asserts, and points out that a quick look at 10-lb. potatoes tells the tale. "Nationally, they generate 16 percent of sales dollars, but 31 percent of volume." He adds that retailers need to get people to shop potatoes for culinary reasons, not price, and they should explore the many taste options available. "We need to refocus our efforts on producing a flavorful potato across all varieties," he says.

Pemsler of the IPC agrees. "We have to quit killing the category with a continual focus on loss leaders," he maintains.

The USPB would agree as well, noting that there are big benefits from introducing shoppers to additional varieties. USPB research has found that shoppers who use more than one variety of potato, as opposed to those that routinely use only one type, purchase and consume more potatoes overall. "Our ethnography work has defined the decision process when shopping for fresh potatoes," says the Board's Ladhoff. "While price consideration is foremost when buying potatoes for everyday use, it becomes the last concern when shopping for a special occasion or recipe in mind. In those situations, shoppers focus first on which variety of potato to choose, which is the perfect opportunity to introduce them to different varieties and educate them on the unique flavors and optimal uses."

From USPB shopper intercept studies, industry insiders know that one in six shoppers already consider another variety before making their purchase selections, and a third of shoppers indicated that they were purchasing potatoes although they already had some at home, meaning that they are open to buying more if the retailer can give them a reason to do so. "Providing information on varieties and their optimal uses at the point-of-purchase will increase both sales and profits from fresh potatoes," states Ladhoff.

Wilcox's Richter acknowledges retailers have an incredible opportunity to use the variety factor to help differentiate from competitors. "If I am a 'price' retailer, I can focus on large bags — 10 pounds, or even more," he says. "If I want to focus on quality or variety, I can promote fingerlings, large russets and purples. If I am looking for more convenience items, microwave-ready potatoes are more appropriate for promotions. If I have urban stores, with a lot of walk-in customers, maybe smaller bags, such as 3-pounders, will appeal to my shoppers."

Pemsler puts it succinctly: "We need to promote to the opportunity in front of us," he says. "We have a product that fits the times. It's nutritious, with a good value position and good consumer penetration. It's simply a matter of making the effort to tell customers!"

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Table courtesy of Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association

This chart from the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association helps produce retail associates learn the difference between potato varieties and how they are best prepared.

Pear Merchandising Challenges And Opportunities

Education, price promotions and eye-catching displays help sell this impulse purchase.

BY CAROL BAREUTHER, RD

If apples were the Goliath of the fall-harvested fruits, pears would definitely be David. According to Perishables Group research, while apples have consistently ranked in the Top Five highest contributors to total produce dollar sales between 2004 and 2008, pears have come in at 24th. In addition, March, 2010, research by the Milwaukie, OR-based Pear Bureau Northwest (PBN) shows that only 15 percent of those shopping the produce department purchase pears. Dennis James, the PBN's director of marketing, says, "The potential for pears is huge."

STOCK PLENTY WITH MULTIPLE VARIETIES

The Pacific Northwest grows 86 percent of the U.S. pear crop. California is the second largest producer with smaller deals out of states such as Michigan and New York. Though domestically grown pears begin harvest in July in California and late August or early September in the Pacific Northwest, there is year-round availability, especially of the Anjou variety. Even so, the United States receives imported pears in the spring and summer from Argentina and Chile, and to a lesser extent, New Zealand.

The seasonal forecast released in June calls for a smaller pear crop out of both the Pacific Northwest and California, with 18.5 million and 2.7 million 44-pound box equivalents, respectively, due to a cool spring and alternate-bearing year.

Fruit size will be down slightly this season too, says Roger Pepperl, marketing director for Stemilt Growers LLC, in Wenatchee, WA. "Bartletts should peak on 90s and 100s, but we'll also have 80s and 110s," he details. "The Anjou's will be down a size with more 80s and 90s."

Even with lighter volume and smaller



Bartletts are always a best-seller and, along with Anjou, make up 80 percent of pear sales.

sizes, Scott Marboe, director of marketing for Oneonta Trading Corp., in Wenatchee, WA, which also markets fruit for Odell, OR-based Diamond Fruit Growers Inc., says, "There should be great availability and volume on all varieties."

Eighty percent of sales are made up by Bartlett and Anjou, adds Pepperl. "The challenge is to carry the other 20 percent of varieties in order to add excitement to the category."

Jim Weber, produce supervisor at Econo Foods, a 6-store chain based in Brillion, WI, says, "Bartlett is our best-seller, followed by Anjou and Bosc. We always carry a red variety, too."

At B&R Stores, a 15-unit chain headquartered in Lincoln, NE, produce director, Randy Bohaty, says, "We'll bring in more seasonal pear varieties such as Comice on an in-and-out basis."

"Newer pear varieties like Taylor's Gold,"

says Weber, "are hard to sell because of the price. We've usually got to retail them for more than \$2 per pound."

In this case, Steve Reisenauer, sales manager for the Sage Fruit Co. LLC, in Yakima, WA, recommends, "Be sure to promote and to make the product visible."

The addition of new varieties can also create a point of differentiation for a retailer, notes Pepperl. "This September, we'll have about 20,000 boxes of Tosca, a European desert-quality pear," he reports.

"In general, retailers need to carry no less than three pear varieties year-round and five or more is even better, especially in the fall," says Loren Queen, marketing and communications manager for Domex Superfresh Growers LLC, in Yakima, WA.

Fifty-six percent of shoppers will come into the produce department to buy a specific variety of pear, according to March, 2010, research by the PBN. "If the variety a con-

sumer is after isn't available," notes Queen, "they will usually choose another variety. That's why it pays to offer an ample variety."

Stemilt's Pepperl agrees. "Sure, there is some cannibalization when you offer more variety, but there's true category growth as well."

HANDLE RIPE FRUIT RIGHT

Econo Food's Weber knows consumers want ripe pears. "We treat pears like bananas," he says. "That is, offer customers two to three stages of ripeness."

B&R Store's Bohaty agrees. "We stage the ripe fruit and have ripening bags available for customers who want them," he says. "Not all customers look for pears at the same level of ripeness."

"Consumer-driven retailers will choose pre-conditioned fruit," states Pepperl. "We don't charge for this value-add — some shippers do — but pre-conditioning probably only adds about 5-cents per pound. Yet, it can really increase sales."

Pre-conditioned pears are gaining in popularity every year, says the PBN's James. "Many of the larger chains are now ordering pre-conditioned fruit," he reports. "Wal-Mart has been ripening pears in-house for seven or eight years now."

About 40 percent of Anjou pears sold by Domex Superfresh Growers are pre-conditioned, estimates Queen. "Anjous don't change color when ripe like the Bartletts, so it can be hard for a customer to tell when this variety is ready to eat," he explains. "Pre-conditioning helps. Plus, this variety responds best to treatment with ethylene."

Suzanne Wolter, director of marketing for the Rainier Fruit Co., in Selah, WA, adds, "There is a tremendous opportunity for retailers to establish a conditioned pear program, especially since the grower/shipper community has finally established voluntary minimum standards for what can be sold as a conditioned pear."

It's a fallacy that pre-conditioned pears can increase shrink. In fact, a pre-conditioned program can lead to zero shrink through continual sell-through of product.

The good thing about pears, according to James, "is that shippers can initiate ripening, but have control at the same time. Pre-conditioned pears will not continue to ripen if they are kept refrigerated and you can easily keep them refrigerated for three to four weeks. Rather, they will only begin ripening again when they are back at room temperature, such as a retail display," he says.

Wolter adds, "Emphasizing the correct procedures at store level is essential to capitalize on maximum benefits of a pre-condi-

"In general, retailers need to carry no less than three pear varieties year-round and five or more is even better, especially in the fall."

**— Loren Queen
Domex Superfresh
Growers LLC**

tioned pear program. Ripe pears should not be stacked more than one or two levels high. Ideally, if space allows, the pears should be displayed in the Euro boxes to reduce handling. However, several retailers have executed successful programs with bulk displays by educating store personnel on handling."

Bohaty describes the merchandising tactics at B&R Stores: "Our produce staff will rotate displays of ripe pears daily. If you don't do this, you'll end up with more shrink," he warns.

It's important to have 100 percent rotation on pear displays, according to Bob Mast, vice president of marketing for Columbia Marketing Intl Corp. (CMI), based in Wenatchee, WA. "Pull off all the fruit. Never layer new fruit on top of fruit that is already out," he warns.

The offering of pre-conditioned pears and handling it correctly can lead to a 16 to 17 percent increase in dollar sales and volume according to March, 2010, research by the PBN.

BEYOND BULK

"The majority of pears — or 90 to 95 percent — are sold bulk," reports PBN's James.

However, Chris Zanobini, executive director of the California Pear Advisory Board (CPAB), in Sacramento, CA, points out, "Pears are also sold in a variety of packaging depending on the market and driven by the retailer. For example, there are 3- and 6-lb. boxes."

Domex offers a 14-lb. box of Bartlett pears early in the season, notes Queen, "which is geared to home canners. This was a big seller for us last year. Retailers who did the best displayed the box next to jars, lids, sugar and a recipe for canned pears," he

details.

In October, CPAB will partner with specific retailers in a tie-in promotion in sponsorship of the Susan G. Komen Foundation and breast cancer awareness. The focal point of the promotion is a special pink-colored carton of pears.

Some retailers also sell bagged pears, says Queen. "We pack 2-, 3-, 5- and 6-lb. bags of Anjous, and some Boscs, too, for club stores and conventional retailers. Even though bags are a small percentage of sales, clamshell packs are even less."

KEEP PEARS TOGETHER

All pears are grouped together in one display at B&R Stores, says Bohaty. "It's a one-stop-shop in a high-traffic area right next to the apples," he describes.

Rainier's Wolter says, "Some retailers treat pears as a specialty category and display small amounts in baskets, while others use pears for color breaks throughout the department. The most successful displays have a pear destination with good location and signage. Pears are one of the highest impulse purchases in the department and can be enhanced through a combination of everyday and on-ad displays at front locations of the department at least 40 percent of the time. In addition," she adds, "awareness and new sales can be generated by utilizing free-standing or secondary displays along with eye-catching signage."

"We offer a colorful display bin with customized signage that is perfect for Pear-of-the-Month promotions," says Stemilt's Pepperl.

EDUCATE CONSUMERS CREATIVELY

"Educate customers about the health benefits of pears, their flavor and how to pick a ripe one, along with recipe and usage suggestions," advises James of PBN.

Wolter adds, "Pears are a nutrient-dense food providing multiple health benefits for retailers to communicate to consumers to help boost sales."

One of the biggest challenges is communicating to consumers that pears are ripe, Wolter adds. "A combination of ads, signage, demos and personnel training is important to a successful program," she says.

B&R Stores' Bohaty says, "Sometimes, we'll cross-merchandise pears with cheese and wine. This is especially successful around the holidays."

Last year, CMI introduced a two-box shipper display with an interactive wine and cheese pairing wheel at the top. This season, the company will offer totes imprinted with wine and cheese pairing suggestions. The

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totes, which hold four to six pears, can be merchandised pre-filled or next to a bulk display. In an attempt to broaden consumers' usage of fresh pears, CMI is also offering 7x11-inch track signs with tear-off recipes and full-color photos on the front and a shopping list on the back. Brett Burdsal, CMI's marketing manager, says, "The idea is to appeal to a younger demographic of consumer."

In a similar vein, PBN and *Epicurious*, an online recipe site, will engage consumers with a fun pear recipe contest that will unfold on Epicurious.com. Retailers can tie in with this by linking to the USA Pears site,

which then links to the *Epicurious* contest, or via in-store signage that lets customers know to enter the contest online, which runs from September 20 to December 31, 2010. This promotion also features iPhone and iPad Apps that consumers can use to access a wealth of recipes.

Also new this season, Stemilt Growers will kick-off a mobile marketing program where consumers will be able to text a number they see in an ad, on POS materials at an in-store pear display or on pear packaging, which will lead them to a simple Web site that provides quick, useful information

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**— Suzanne Wolter
Rainier Fruit Co.**

about a particular pear variety, a recipe or usage tips and perhaps a coupon.

PROMOTE LONGER INTO THE YEAR

Most pear promotions a decade ago took place between October and December, says PBN's James. "Today, there are strong promotional opportunities into May and June, too," he points out.

"At Econo Food, we'll promote Bartletts every other week in the fall," reveals Weber. "Then, we'll also promote Boscs. In fact, we'll often pair Boscs and Anjous or Boscs and Bartletts in an ad for 98-cents per pound. This increases sales of both varieties."

"It's important," reminds Rainier's Wolter, "for retailers to strategically promote multiple varieties throughout the season. Mix-and-match ads will lift the entire category."

"Hot price promotions," says CMI's Mast, "such as 10 pounds for \$10 are effective with Bartletts, Anjous and Boscs anytime from September to January."

Pear-a-paloozas or pear-o-ramas, where four to five varieties of pears are price-promoted at the same time, are advantageous, according to Stemilt's Pepperl. "Retailers can sell up to 20 percent more pears this way than a single variety ad, so it's important to increase display size to keep up with demand," he says.

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Leafy Greens — The Quiet Powerhouse

Education and recipes are key sales drivers in introducing leafy greens to consumers.

BY BOB JOHNSON

Leafy greens have quietly but steadily increased in popularity to become a powerhouse in the produce department. The desire for more healthful foods has brought an increased interest in including leafy greens as a regular part of the diet, and the packaged products have made greens accessible to more people. "I would say demand for leafy greens is up, depending on the variety you're looking at," says Mitch Ardantz, managing partner at Bonipak Produce Co., based in Santa Maria, CA.

According to IRI statistics from 20 major markets for the 52 weeks ending May 20, 2010, sales of the entire greens category increased 8 percent. Sales of bunched or bulk greens increased by an even healthier 8.9 percent as consumers look to save money by washing and cutting their own bulk greens. "Some of it may be driven by economic issues," recognizes Bud Floyd, vice president of marketing for C.H. Robinson Worldwide Inc., headquartered in Eden Prairie, MN. "You pay for the convenience of the bagged product."

This is clearly a growth category in the long-term, even if economic trends may shift sales in the short-term from bagged to bulk, or the other way around. "We believe there are two reasons the greens category is growing," Floyd continues. "One is the health aspect of greens; the other is that value-added greens are a benefit to the consumers because they are triple-washed, and greens take time to rinse because they tend to collect sand."

Spinach consumption has increased from .8 pounds per capita just two decades ago to an estimated 1.9 pounds per capita this year, according to Ray Clark, executive director of the Leafy Greens Council, head-



According to reports by the Leafy Greens Council, consumption of Romaine, red and green leaf lettuce have more than tripled in the past decades.

quartered in St. Paul, MN. Consumption of Romaine, red and green leaf lettuce have more than tripled in the past two decades, he reports, from 3.8 pounds per person in 1990 to an estimated 11.2 pounds per person this year. "Cabbage has stayed about the same; the numbers haven't changed too much," Clark says. The high water mark for cabbage consumption was 9.3 pounds per person in 1993, and the decline since has been very gradual.

The numbers add up to an important opportunity that can pay off if the leafy greens category is handled well. "Don't underestimate the whole category of greens," advises Ashley Rawl, director of sales and marketing at Walter P. Rawl & Sons Inc., in Pelion, SC. "There's money to be made there if you merchandise the produce well and keep it fresh."

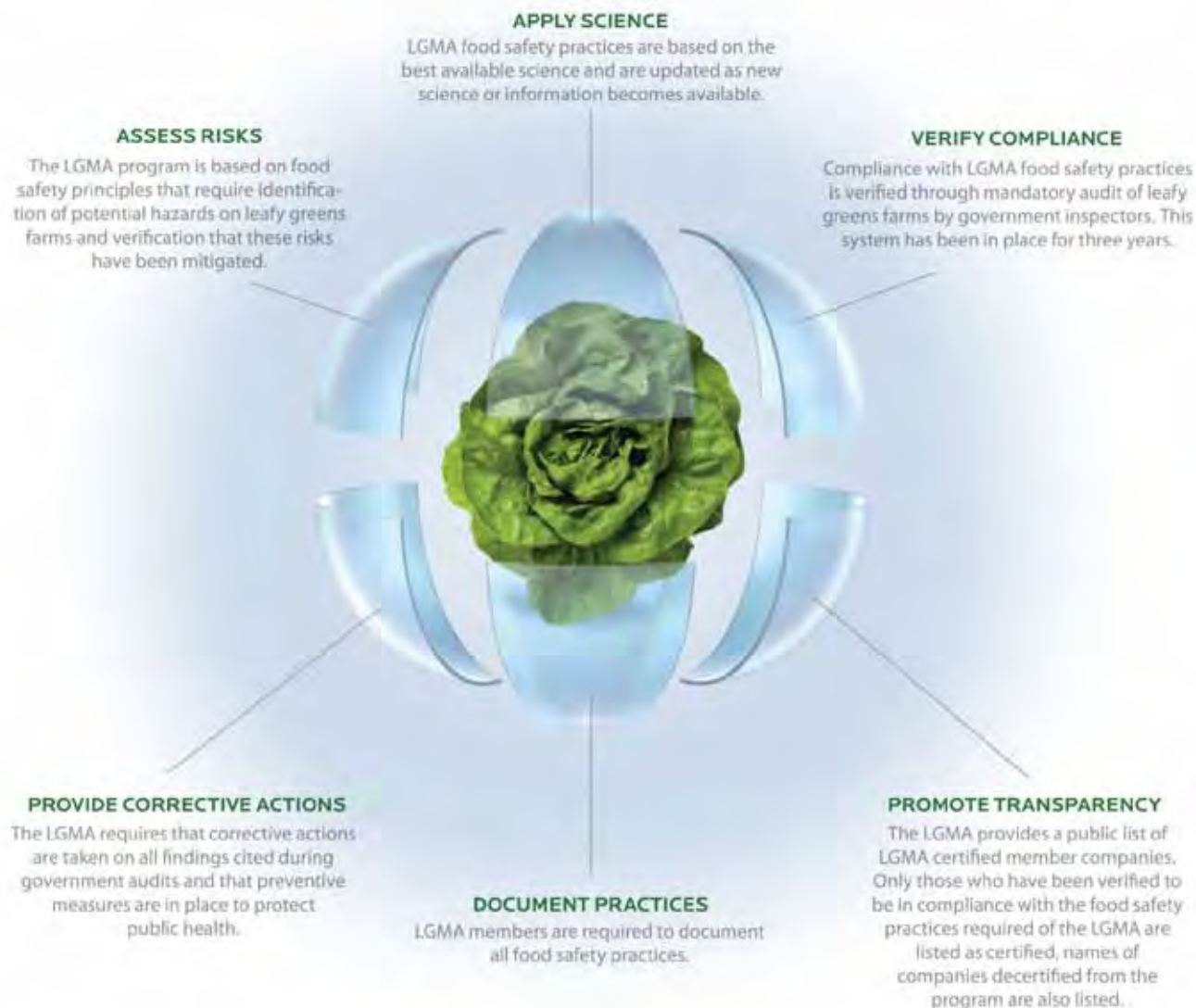
While some of the leafy greens sales

have shifted from bulk to convenient packaged products, the two are best seen as working together to drive the category. "Packaged salads and processors in general, have made it possible for the produce industry to keep per capita up on all these items," explains Tim Greene, director of farming and marketing at Hollar & Greene Produce Co. Inc., located in Boone, NC.

PACKAGED AND BULK: BOSOM BUDDIES

Packaged and bulk products can complement each other in a complete leafy greens program. Sometimes, the same consumer purchases both packaged and bulk greens, and their choice depends largely on how much time they feel they have to spend in the kitchen. "We like to think the value-added products are complementary to the bulk products," Rawl says. "Some

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"We like to think the value-added products are complementary to the bulk products. Some customers prefer the bulk products; some markets are strong for the bulk products. Some people like the bulk when they have time, and buy the packaged when they need the convenience."

**— Ashley Rawl
Walter P. Rawl & Sons**

customers prefer the bulk products; some markets are strong for the bulk products. Some people like the bulk when they have time, and buy the packaged when they need the convenience."

For some consumers, packaged greens may offer a comforting entry into the category, which have piqued their interest for nutritional reasons. Spinach is proving itself to be particularly amenable to the packaged

format. "Some retailers don't even stock as much naked spinach as they used to, but we continue to look for more ways for retailers to merchandise it," says Woody Johnson, senior vice president of sales and marketing of Green Giant Fresh, a branch of Growers Express LLC, based in Salinas, CA.

Sales of packaged spinach, however, continue to increase. "Spinach is the best-selling of all leaf items, and due to the fact that leaf items must be packaged in some form, it

National Seal Of Safety Is On The Way

In the wake of the 2006 *E. Coli* spinach outbreak, the major California leafy greens growers and processors developed standards to assure the public that all precautions are being taken to ensure their food is safe.

The Sacramento-based California Department of Food & Agriculture conducts third-party audits to certify that members of the Sacramento-based California Leafy Green Products Handler Marketing Agreement (LGMA), are meeting these standards. More than 100 handlers, producing more than 99 percent of the state's leafy greens, have signed on to the agreement.

But there will not be a seal of safety at the retail level until a national program is developed. "The use of the seal on the retail level is pretty much hinging on what the national program is doing," says April Ward, communications director of the LGMA. "Our program is through the

California Department of Food & Agriculture, and they're saying we can't certify product from Arizona, Florida, Colorado and other states."

The process for creating a national food safety program for leafy greens is already well underway as the United States Department of Agriculture held hearings on a national program last fall, and the Western Growers Association, a leading trade agricultural association based in Irvine, CA, is in support of a national program.

While it could take some time for the details of the national leafy greens agreement to be worked out, spinach is already almost all the way back in the eyes of the public. "For the most part, spinach is back to where it was before," says Woody Johnson, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Green Giant Fresh, a branch of Growers Express LLC, based in Salinas, CA.

pb

makes sense to go all the way with a value-added pack," Greene points out. "Collards are close to spinach per capita, but their size requires another processing step for the value-added pack, so we see collards staying in the bulk category."

The major packaged cabbage product is for slaw, but the demand for packaged slaw has reached a plateau. "The majority of our cabbage business is for processing, specifically coleslaw," reports Mitch Beyler, vice president in John B. Martin & Sons Farms Inc., headquartered in Brockport NY. "But our cabbage business has steadily decreased; the demand for cabbage for slaw is flat. On the cabbage, we're growing specifically for the kosher market, which gives us a little bit of a niche."

One of C.H. Robinson's brands, Columbus, OH-based Glory Foods Inc., produces a line of bagged, ready-to-cook greens, including collards, turnip, mustard and kale greens.

As the markets shift, producers are keeping themselves going by finding new products. One area worth some attention is the growing variety of packaged leafy greens mixes. "Spinach is only one of many leafy greens that have become popular in packaged sales," remarks Jan Berk, vice president of marketing and business develop-



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Pre-washed bagged greens offer consumers value-added benefits as they don't have to spend time washing trapped sand and dirt before using them.

ment at Oxnard, CA-based San Miguel Produce Inc. "Today, San Miguel provides 17 varieties of specialty greens in both conventional and organic form to a large majority of North America."

Some handlers are willing and able to produce specific packaged mixes to suit the needs of their retailer customers. "People are always asking us about different blends of packaged greens," notes Bonipak's Ardantz.

While the packaged products can compete with the bulk, there is demand enough to support brisk sales of both. "I gauge this by our own bulk sales performance vs. our packaged sales — we have been specializing and doing both for more than 15 years," says Berk. "And, while we continue to see growth in the packaged side of leafy greens, bulk greens — particularly in the West — are still a strong and viable commodity."

EDUCATE CONSUMERS ON USAGE AND VERSATILITY

Most people have heard the word about the extraordinary nutritional value of leafy greens. "We ought to be calling ourselves a health food store rather than a vegetable company," jokes Frank Schuster, owner and president of Val Verde Vegetable Co. Inc., headquartered in McAllen, TX. "The health benefits of leafy greens are incredible."

It is important to remember that healthful as they are, greens can also be fun. "It's very important to teach the versatility of greens; they can be used in so many ways," asserts Rawl of Walter P. Rawl & Sons. "Greens can go either way. They are nutritional powerhouses, but you can put them in a pasta dish with cream and enjoy it that way as well."

While most consumers know that greens

are nutritious, many people could use some information on the extraordinary versatility of greens. "It is important to help remove the perceived barrier that is sometimes associated with these specialty greens," reminds Berk. "Consumers don't know what to do with many non-traditional greens or how wonderfully diverse and easy they are to prepare in any diet or meal."

Recipes and other cooking tips can be an important way to make bulk leafy greens more attractive, particularly in areas where people are not familiar with how to cook greens, but are open to suggestions. "It's about making people familiar with greens, educating them about cooking techniques and providing recipes," explains Floyd of C.H. Robinson. "Greens have been traditional in the South, but recipes are important outside of that area."

To a great extent, the market for different varieties of leafy greens depends on different demographics. "There are different channels you go through for selling different leafy greens," notes Schuster. "Eastern Europeans like kohlrabi, while Southerners eat collards, turnip greens and mustard greens. There are different niches for different producers."

There are numerous special events that can be helpful in leafy greens merchandising campaigns. "Nutrition is currently the most often-cited benefit of leafy greens," reports Hollar & Greene's Greene. "From our perspective, leafy greens are best marketed as a wholesome, traditional food with an essential place on the family table, especially at holidays such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, St. Patrick's Day and Easter. We have found that shoppers at chain stores who reply to surveys request recipes more frequently than anything else."

"It is important to help remove the perceived barrier that is sometimes associated with these specialty greens. Consumers don't know what to do with many non-traditional greens or how wonderfully diverse and easy they are to prepare in any diet or meal."

**— Jan Berk
San Miguel Produce Inc.**

Restaurants are frequently a good place to look to find out what items are trending, and that bodes well for greens. "In restaurants, greens are appearing more on the menu," Floyd says.

There is, in particular, a growing interest in Heirloom or exotic greens that bring new flavor profiles. "In foodservice, Heirloom varieties are very desirable," reports Ande Manos, in the marketing and business development department for Babe' Farms Inc., located in Santa Maria, CA. "They also want distinctive flavor profiles and micro greens. We get a lot of requests for micro greens, things like small lettuces, micro mustard horseradish and micro mint."

According to Manos, Little Gem, a pint-sized lettuce, is also gaining in popularity among foodservice chefs, as is roquette, or arugula, which adds a peppery and slightly bitter flavor to salads and cooked dishes.

Effective merchandising of this growing category depends greatly on knowing your demographic, and knowing their familiarity with greens. "Each area of the country is different, so each retailer has to look at its demographic and decide the best means of promotion," says Bruce Bolton, senior sales representative for C.H. Robinson and brand manager for Glory Foods.

pb

Consumers Go Nuts For Pistachios

With a focus on the added health benefits of pistachios, retailers find they can't keep the nut from flying off shelves.

BY CHUCK GREEN

Shoppers are gobbling pistachios like, well, nuts, leading to record sales of the snack nut. Nonetheless, a current pistachio shortage has led — at least temporarily — to record high prices, states industry experts. Processors have nearly or completely sold out of pistachios, and until the new crop comes in September, prices will remain at all-time high levels, says Richard Matoian, executive director of the Western Pistachio Association (WPA) in Fresno, CA.

"It's a finite supply and getting really low," warns Marc Seguin, director of marketing for Paramount Farms Inc, in Bakersfield, CA. He says the company has enough remaining inventory to satisfy its established customers through the rest of the year, although the supply will be as tight, ratcheting prices upward. "It's a momentary blip," adds Seguin.

Likewise, Setton International Foods Inc., based in Commack, NY, has fulfilled its commitments to its customers and looks forward to the new crop, declares Joseph Setton, vice president of sales and marketing.

SELLING OUT

Nichols Farms, headquartered in Hanford, CA, reports similarly hearty sales, both domestically and internationally, and has shipped more domestically this year than last, according to Milt Castro, sales manager at Nichols Farms. "In fact," he adds, "most of us are sold out." While acknowledging they've been high of late, he urges retailers to remember that, typically, pistachio prices are set at the beginning of the crop year and that the industry was anticipating a large crop. Consequently, when Nichols Farms, for instance, contracted with many of its retail customers, it did so at a "reasonable"



Prices on pistachios have been high lately due to an unexpected crop shortage.

price, and one at which their customers could maintain their pricing at a certain level. However, when sales caught on fire, most processors simply ran out of product because they didn't receive their anticipated volume, he notes.

While Nichols also points to cost increases sparked by concerns over a potential gap in supply before the new crop comes in, Joe Connolly, produce category manager for Quincy, MA-based Stop & Shop Supermarket Co., adds, "Demand fell off after we were forced to raise retails a bit, though not to the anticipated degree. However, over time, demand has continued to slide due to the higher retails," he observes.

OVERCOMING THE SALMONELLA OUTBREAK

The sales flurry seems particularly impressive, considering the short-lived impact that the pistachio salmonella outbreak, which occurred last March, had on

the industry. The outbreak culminated in a short-term 30 to 50 percent drop in shipments, observes Matoian. Only about two months after the onset of the incident, the market rebounded completely. "In fact, July through December of last year yielded record pistachio sales and shipments both domestically and internationally," he adds.

The salmonella problem was isolated to one processor and is yesterday's news, emphasizes Teresa Keenan, marketing manager for Keenan Farms in Avenal, CA. She says the event served as a valuable lesson to the industry, and emphasizes that food safety always has been "extremely important" at Keenan Farm.

The pistachio industry reacted well to the outbreak, adds Castro. He points out that "almost every single processor" invested millions of dollars in updating their plants and ensuring that shipped products are as safe as ever, heading off likely FDA mandates. At Nichols, a plant reconfiguration

culminated in the addition of a ready-to-eat section, an area that raw products never come anywhere near, he says.

Similarly, since the outbreak, Keenan Farms has "stepped up" its already stringent standard operating procedures to ensure the safety of its products, Keenan observes. The upcoming 2010 crop appears to be about the same size as last year's approximately 350 million pounds, she notes.

Meanwhile, Setton assures Setton International Foods has one of the most sophisticated food safety programs in the entire nut industry and continues to experience "very strong" demand for its pistachios. Setton is also working with retailers to develop promotional programs for the new crop.

On the retail side, Jacksonville, FL-based Winn-Dixie Stores Inc. experienced no long-term negative impact from the recall, according to category manager Jerry Davis.

HEALTHFUL SNACKING

In addition to the swift action by processors, Matoian of the WPA attributes the industry's rebound to factors such as consumer confidence that no confirmed cases of illness linked to the consumption of tainted pistachios were reported by the Centers for Disease Control. He also cites

increasing consumer awareness of the healthful aspects of pistachios.

Adds Paramount's Seguin: "Since pistachios are more healthful than potato chips, it's great for people to realize that." He knows the company has a salty snack that's as good from a taste standpoint and entertaining from a consumer enjoyment standpoint as any other single item in the \$10 billion salty snack category. "If we can just add on the fact that this is better for you than 95 percent of everything else in that category, we have a really good consumer proposition," he remarks.

Matoian points out that 90 percent of pistachio sales can be attributed to their billing as a snack food item, with the remaining 10 percent of sales for use as an ingredient.

Five years ago, only one study on the health benefits of pistachios had been conducted, whereas seven have been generated this year alone, helping enhance the credibility of the health benefits of pistachios, says Kelly Plowe, Paramount Farm's nutrition communications manager. That's why pistachios are now the on the same playing field as other nuts and are receiving their due media coverage, she adds.

The entire nut category has gotten a "tremendous lift" from the attention gener-

ated by health-related publicity, Winn-Dixie's Davis adds. While he doesn't believe the health benefits of a pistachio are the main driver of this year's growth, Stop & Shop's Connolly calls the industry efforts in this area a "contributing factor."

Along those lines, Shannon Patten, media and community relations manager at Lakeland, FL-based Publix Super Markets Inc., says one of the best way to promote pistachios is to reinforce the consumer message that "they are good for your heart," and 90 percent unsaturated fat. Not only that, retailers should play up the multiple uses of pistachios. "Remind them of recipes they go well with," she suggests, and provide a strong promotional program that provides value to the consumer.

YEAR-ROUND CONSUMPTION

There's also a matter of convincing retailers that pistachios aren't just used as gifts during the holidays, but consumed year-round, comments Nichols Farms' Castro, who suggests various themed units related to special occasions such as holidays and sports, including the NCAA basketball tournament and Super Bowl. Many processors, whom he believes leverage similar related tactics, are helping to further acclimate retailers with the benefits of drawing attention to pistachios more often than they previously have. "They see the sales and what promoting and displaying pistachios has done for their category in terms of profitability," he says.

With its different lines of nuts, including pistachios, Winn-Dixie focuses on point-of-purchase material and display bins, which promote the healthful benefits of nuts, explains Davis.

WPA's Matoian recommends retailers leverage freestanding, mobile units in their produce section.

Paramount Farms is continuing to expand to places where pistachios haven't been sold before, says Seguin. At the same time, from a retailer perspective, it's about looking at your store and the ideal location for your best "impulse" items — those that will drive the most growth and profit for the store. He emphasizes they are best positioned right up front, in the lobby, at the entrance of the produce department, and check out.

Stop & Shop's Connolly emphasizes a need for aggressive pricing from suppliers with the arrival of new crops, which would stir "some excitement" with promotions and displays. Furthermore, he says the industry must maintain the level of consumer demand that it gained in the fall of 2007. **pb**

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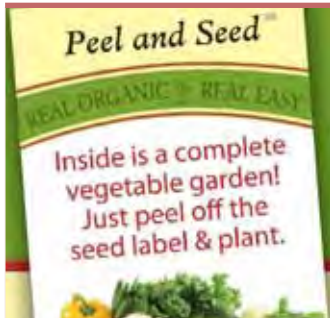


MELLANO & Co., CARLSBAD, CA

Bruce Brady has been named director of business development and marketing. He has been an active member of the floral industry since 1997, holding sales, marketing and business development positions with The Sun Valley Group for more than 10 years, and more recently with Farmers West Flowers & Bouquets.

Reader Service No. 338

NEW PRODUCTS



EASY ORGANIC GARDENING

Bethel Organics, Arcadia, FL, offers an easy way to start an organic vegetable garden with Peel N Seed™. Each hang-card contains three popular vegetables. Just peel off the seed label, plant and water. It requires very little merchandising space and makes a great impulse item.

Reader Service No. 339



ORGANIC POTTING MIXES

Espoma, Millville, NJ, is launching a new line of organic potting mixes and soil amendments used for organic gardening. Each mix contains a rich blend of only the finest natural ingredients. No synthetic plant foods or chemicals are used. The mixes are created for all indoor and outdoor containers and for all indoor and outdoor potted plants. Available in 4-, 8-, 16-qt. bags and 1- and 2-cubic foot bags.

Reader Service No. 340



ECO-SAFE FROST PROTECTANT

Liquid Fence Co., Brodheadsville, PA, introduces FreezPruf™. The eco-safe frost protectant spray developed by botanists improves plants' natural cold tolerance capabilities. The spray protects plants' foliage and flowers externally and systemically improves its ability to survive ice crystal damage.

Reader Service No. 341

ANNOUNCEMENT



CELEBRATING 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Blossom Bucket Inc., North Lawrenceville, OH, is celebrating its 25th year of business. The giftware company offers a broad collection of primitive folk art, general gifts and holiday creations for retail floral and gift departments. Celebrations are being noted and well wishes are being sent via Twitter and Facebook.

Reader Service No. 342

NEW PRODUCTS



ECO-FRIENDLY DISPLAY CUBES

FFR-DSI, Twinsburg, OH, is promoting its new Display/Filler Cubes, which add height and dimension to product presentation while increasing selling space and keeping product off the floor. The extra durable cubes can hold a variety of products up to 125 lbs and feature non-slip rubber feet for increased safety. The eco-friendly black recycled plastic is both USDA- and FDA-approved. Available in 12-inch W square-style and 18-inch W rectangular-style.

Reader Service No. 343



ECO VASE ARRANGEMENT

Farmers West Flowers & Bouquets Inc., Carpinteria, CA, now offers a 6 1/2-inch Eco Vase arrangement featuring a biodegradable container and VeriFlora-certified California-grown product. Pairing sustainably grown flowers with an eco-friendly container completes the cycle to produce a beautiful and environmentally responsible arrangement.

Reader Service No. 344



BIODEGRADABLE SCENTED ORNAMENTS

EnviroScent, Atlanta, GA, introduces ScentSickles® scented ornaments to bring trees to life with the smell of fresh-cut pine. Promoted as safe, clean and eco-friendly, the biodegradable ornaments require no oil, electricity or flames. They are available in 6- and 8-pack tubes and are pre-packed in an assortment of display options for optimal merchandising.

Reader Service No. 345

Sustainability: Enlightening And Motivating Floral Customers

Forward-thinking floral executives are seeking ways to capture prospective customers as the world progresses toward a more environmentally and socially responsible future.

BY E. SHAUNN ALDERMAN

Imagine a world where retailers don't pay to create marketing gimmicks to drive sales, but rather a world where retailers' profits are based on their commitment to do what's right for living beings and the earth.

That's the idea behind embracing sustainability as the next marketing opportunity. But saying "marketing opportunity" is similar to saying "dieting" — it's not the most healthful approach. The goal is really about enlightening and motivating customers to enjoy floral products while creating a healthier world one stem at a time.

ATTITUDES AND ACTIONS

In today's green-minded world, some students are seeking careers with connections to environmental and social responsibility. It is not unreasonable to hear, "I want to be a CSO — a Chief Sustainability Officer." Green talk is rampant and its lingo is nearly mainstream. But are floral shoppers concerned enough about the environment and sustainability that green marketing messages are actually sinking in?

Potted calla lily grower, John Albers, general manager of Homestead Growers Niagara Inc., headquartered in Vineland, Ontario, Canada, remarks while the nursery has previously offered fiber and coco pots, he has not seen an increase in customers inquiring about eco-friendly pots. Albers, whose Canadian nursery also has a growing facility in Apopka, FL, admits when it comes to the green issue, "Cash is king. The customer wants the best price. The consumer will only take the eco-friendly route if the price is the same."

Earthsense LLC, a marketing company based in Syracuse, NY, that specializes in "green" market research and measuring con-

sumer attitudes, indicates on its Web site that 50 percent of the U.S. population now has strong attitudes toward being eco-friendly. How should retailers develop marketing and merchandising strategies when they are unsure of true consumer attitudes about sustainably grown floral products?

THE MEANING OF SUSTAINABILITY

"Sustainability is doing good while doing well," says Orlando, FL-based Robert McLaughlin, CEO of Organic Bouquet and EcoFlowers.com, the largest online provider of eco-friendly and organic wholesale floral products. The company's sustainably grown floral offerings are grown on strictly monitored farms in California, Ecuador and Colombia. Production practices are always earth-friendly and sometimes organic, and farm workers and their families have access to life enhancement programs. McLaughlin says education is the strong push in Ecuador, where the company is heading a major community project — a college fund — trying to guide rural high school students into college.

Hydroponic growing and geothermal power reduces the use of pesticides and water in Kenyan greenhouses owned by Oserian Farm, the Africa-based parent company of cut flower supplier World Flowers LLC, in Englewood, NJ. President Joe Farrell says social responsibility is a primary focus to the parent company, which he says is the largest Fair Trade Certified flower farm in the world. Oserian provides free education, housing and medical care to employees and their families. "The support means a lot to the people on the farm," says Farrell. "The need is tremendous, and there is great happiness there with the school, the



Clearwater Nursery's Reduce Reuse Recycle shipper/display box is widely prebooked for Earth Day in April.

uniforms and the education."

WHAT STEPS ARE BEING TAKEN?

With desire for continued business in the

challenging economy, some growers and suppliers across North America and beyond are watching consumer trends, acknowledging green attitudes and behavior and making their own efforts to make a difference. This compilation showing various endeavors by industry members is a mere glimpse of the many actions being taken by nurseries and suppliers.

As a part of the company's commitment to use green practices, Clearwater Nursery Inc., based in Nipoma, CA, offers retailers its trademarked Earth Friendly Solutions program. The popular Reduce Reuse Recycle shipper/display box has been available for the past two years, according to Steven Medeiros, executive of marketing. He says the actual box, printed with soy ink, is approved by the Sustainable Forestry Initiative and though currently available, the display box is widely pre-booked for Earth Day in April. Medeiros says the sisal bags made from the agave plant are doing well. "We test rigorously on-site before including anything under our Earth Friendly banner. We challenge our vendors to bring in new products, such as film and pots, and we test everything here at the nursery to see if it holds," Medeiros explains.

Four years ago, Harster Greenhouses Inc., headquartered in West Flamborough, Ontario, Canada, chose to become a pesticide-free nursery and implement bio-control/pest management strategies. "We adopted this philosophy because we realized the pests were becoming resistant to pesticides," says vice president Pascale Harster. Convinced consumers are becoming more concerned about people and the planet, Harster says the production practice costs a bit more, but the rewards are worth it. Her suggestion for those puzzled about how to promote her company's earth-friendly potted plants, orchids and dish gardens: "Use the phrase, 'Pesticide-Free.' Consumers can easily understand this terminology."

Penang Nursery Inc., in Apopka, FL, has been marketing a container line called PSW pots for more than one year. Available from four inches to 37 inches, the earth-friendly pots are made in China of recycled plastic milk jugs, stone powder and wood scraps from the furniture industry. Penang owner, Brady Lo, says, "We've had an amazing response, and the pricing is in line with products on the market today." He says the containers are a huge alternative to fiberglass and foam, and are available palletized or by the case.

World Class Flowers contracted installation of a solar energy system earlier this year, which is estimated to generate close to \$600,000 revenue in Solar Renewable Ener-

Telling Your Story

Floral retailers interested in tapping the market segment of shoppers with strong attitudes toward being eco-friendly will want to tell customers what steps they are taking to make changes for the better. Retailers can boast about the floral department using energy-efficient lighting if that's a recent change. Promote your efforts in the weekly sales flyers by including brief info pieces on how your company sources floral bouquets and other products. Go wild when there are opportunities to promote local floral and foliage material, and remember the value of regional promotions such as California Grown.

Enlarge some sustainably grown floral labels and tags so shoppers can read them easily and title the sign with a question such as, "What Is Sustainability?" Let the labels talk and tell the story.

Offer information about your eco-friendly efforts in a format appropriate for school-age children and make the material available as give-aways for children's festivals, eco events, green clubs

and Scout troops.

Host a student think tank session and invite students from the local high school or green club organization to create solutions for their environmental concerns. Offer a store tour highlighting what your store does to help the environment. Have maps and plenty of visuals available to educate students about where the floral products are grown. Discuss what it takes to get the products to the stores and into the consumers' homes. In addition to teaching, you will learn from the students and become enlightened by their attitudes and actions. Remember: this age group is your next crop of customers.

Don't forget to involve seniors, and tap baby boomers for their ideas on earth-friendly products. There are so many ways to connect with customers, including utilizing social media strategy to cause a buzz and gather feedback. The feedback will help you understand buying habits and learn what motivates customers to buy floral products. **pb**

gy Certificates during the next five years. According to information provided by the fresh cut flower company, "The system will offset more than 150 pounds of carbon dioxide annually and is equivalent to recycling more than 3 million cans of soda, not burning 18,213 gallons of gasoline annually and planting 19 acres of trees."

CROSS-MERCHANDISE

Farrell of World Flowers suggests retailers take advantage of Fair Trade Month in October and plan for major cross-merchandising opportunities throughout the store. It's no longer enough to thoughtfully display products with hopes of encouraging floral sales. A shopper who strolled into floral from the produce department where she read the asparagus she just put in her cart is from Peru might also be interested in knowing the floral bouquet she wants to buy is eco-friendly and sustainably grown. Why? Because she needs the asparagus for her healthful, home-cooked meals, but because of her limited budget she may have to rationalize a non-consumable purchase. Telling her the floral bouquet is safe for the environment and safe for workers who harvested the flowers educates her and helps her justify

her feel-good purchase.

McLaughlin of Organic Bouquet offers, "I encourage everyone to take a step toward sustainability no matter how small. A small step at first is fine." He believes once the "big guys" in the industry make the commitment, then others will follow.

Changing the world one stem at a time may seem a daunting task, but retailers watching consumer buying habits shift in an era leading toward more social and environmental changes will step up or they might end up stepping back from floral profits. **pb**



If you are seeking ways to tell your story but need help initiating a program, contact PRODUCE BUSINESS magazine for hints and suggestions. Or tell us about your successful efforts.

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Salads In Stresa

After hearing reports about people residing in the Mediterranean region of Europe living longer partially due to their eating habits, I finally decided to make the long flight — not my favorite way of spending my time — from Atlanta to Milan, Italy. The objective was to witness firsthand how some of the population lived and their food consumption habits.

From there, it was about an hour's drive north to the beautiful Lake District and the summer tourist town of Stresa, bordering the shores of large Lake Maggiore about another hour's drive from the Swiss border. There, I met Valentina who would be my guide for the duration of the stay. She was a pretty woman, about 40, with a body fat index approaching zero. Yes, she epitomized what I had envisioned. Needless to say, a sizeable percentage of the population had body characteristics falling into this approximate range. Here, obesity did not appear to be a problem.

Stresa is a relatively small town with a population somewhere in the neighborhood of 5,000. Nearly everywhere I went was within walking distance from the hotel. The main shopping district, composed primarily of century or older buildings facing narrow cobblestone streets, was only a five-minute walk from where I was staying. Most of the stores are small, specialty shops and one or two squares are home to a weekly farmers' markets. But the predominant source of food is the relatively small Carrefour market. Prior to visiting Stresa, my impression had been the company only operated mega stores.

Size, however, did not stop the produce department from having an organized, winding path, exposing all items to customers' gazes as soon as they entered. The allocation was limited, but each item was appropriately signed and nearly everything was packaged, including bananas. Unless an item was in a uniform weight, package pricing was on the basis of kilograms. By the amount of store traffic, one could conclude food shopping was being done multiple times each week. The population wanted their perishables fresh, with storage at a premium because the average housing unit is small by comparison to those on this side of the Atlantic.

I headed to one of the local restaurants — it was a must to visit one of the local pizzerias — a small place with a larger patio in the rear that featured a grapevine-covered pergola. A large, deliciously

fresh salad and half of a very thin crust pizza with limited tomato sauce and delicious cheese was a perfect evening meal, which included processed grapes in the form of wine, of course.

No matter where we ate lunch or dinner, salad was always the first course. Buffets featured delightful salad bars with both vegetables and fruit. Breakfasts featured a selection of whole peaches, plums, bananas, apples, strawberries and blueberries. In addition to being nutritious, all this produce had an added benefit for the traveler — it helped reduce one's appetite for large quantities of the entrée. Sometimes, lunches were only comprised of a salad and a pasta dish.

A visit to a larger city provided the opportunity to observe the action of a more spread out population. The destination was Como, population 85,000, at the head of a lake with the same name, where many of you may know George Clooney vacations.

Comparing Como to Stresa is primarily about size with more multiples of everything. Some of the streets are wider, but walking continues to be the predominant mode of travel in the downtown area. Here, there are daylong produce markets. From both morning and afternoon observations, product appearance was always well kept and often customers were nearly shoulder-to-shoulder doing their shopping.

During a visit to Milan, besides the historic buildings, there was an opportunity to visit the famous skylight covered Galleria Vittorio Emanuele with a configuration similar to a cross. There, at the four corners intersection, was the unmistakable McDonald's arches. Halfway through a week eating Italian called for one relapse to an American diet. At 2:00 PM, this was the busiest multi-story fast food outlet I've ever seen. Significantly, salad purchases were substantial by the worldwide clientele.

Contributing to the dietary habits is the limited amount of beef cattle grown in the region. Supply does control demand. Apparently, the Italian cuisine, in conjunction with a greater amount of exercise from walking and bicycling, does have an impact on the amount of body weight. Not to be forgotten is portion control, with salads larger than pasta and the limited amounts of red meat. The contrast to both Italian-American cuisine and the American eating menus provides a thought-provoking alternative of opportunity for the entire produce industry. Not a bad lesson from Stresa. **pb**

No matter where we ate lunch or dinner, salad was always the first course. Buffets featured delightful salad bars with both vegetables and fruit. In addition to being nutritious, all this produce had an added benefit for the traveler — it helped reduce one's appetite for large quantities of the entrée.



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Reader Service # 6



Where Is The Fresh Produce Industry Headed?

Making the best possible strategy for one's enterprise means knowing what lies ahead. Predicting the future is a talent only claimed by a few, and I don't pretend to be one of them. But with floodings and extreme weather almost all over the world during the past weeks and months, climate change is the talk of the town. When talking about climate change, sustainability is the buzzword.

"Organic" used to be almost a synonym for "sustainable," but the hype of organic seems to be over in Europe. Don't be mistaken; the market for organic is still growing substantially, but the real hoopla has passed. With organic becoming more widely known and available, discussions then turn to the sustainability of organics. How sustainable is it to import organic mangos out of Latin America or Africa?

Sustainability is not only about the way of producing but also about carbon emissions and food miles after the harvest. But it not only applies to imports from far away countries. Intensive organic greenhouse growing of tomatoes and cucumbers is considered less sustainable than the conventional way of growing of tomatoes, sweet peppers and cucumbers in greenhouses. Conventional greenhouse growers of tomatoes, sweet peppers and cucumbers hardly use any pesticides and use far less fossil energy per kg of produce as their production per square foot is much higher due to their hydroponic way of growing, compared to what organic growers can produce in their soil-based growing system. That said, conventional, pesticide-free produce is considered to have more or less the same market potential as organic produce. The least we can say is that the gap between conventional and organic is narrowing.

It is clear that the future of conventional vegetable growing is soil-free. For tomatoes, cucumbers and sweet peppers, that has been the case for more than a decade or two. But now, it is also the case for leafy greens and herbs. With soil-free techniques, such as hydroponic nutrient film technology (NFT)

and floating rafts, producing greens without soil is not a futuristic dream anymore. With far-reaching possibilities for automation, NFT seems to have the greatest potential.

It doesn't end with leafy vegetables and herbs. In some countries, such as the Netherlands for example, research projects are trying to find out how to grow leeks and even berries hydroponically. The evolution has to do with methyl bromide being banned. The remaining soil disinfectants are not as efficient. Harvest security is under pressure. At the same time, supermar-

ket chains, mainly in Germany, try to differentiate themselves from their direct competitors by offering produce with the lowest pesticide residues as possible, especially since Greenpeace started comparing pesticide residues on produce (grapes, sweet peppers, lettuce, etc.) sold in the most important retailers in Germany. With the results being published and commented on by the media, growers find themselves under commercial pressure to use as few pesticides as possible.

Bit by bit, it seems there is a gap coming between the fresh and the fresh-cut industry. Fresh produce is likely to be grown in the most sustainable way, while the fresh-cut industry is still looking for the cheapest produce around. Italy, Spain and France are the main European countries of origin for produce, even for the fresh-cut industry in northern Europe, and certainly for greens. Ecological sustainability is still not that much of an issue in the

fresh-cut industry.

But in general, one can conclude that sustainability is more and more becoming the buzz word. The concept offers itself through various ways: organic, low carbon emissions, local-for-local, low food miles, etc. Organic is still strong because of the fact that is certified synthetic pesticide-free. For fruits and vegetables, this remains the most important trigger, while for meat, animal welfare is a strong argument as well. But sustainability is most definitely no longer limited to pesticides. There is much more to it than that.

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Alpine Fresh	38	31	800-292-8777	305-594-8506
Andrews Brothers, Inc.	127	55	313-841-7400	313-841-0385
Associated Potato Growers, Inc.	146	137	800-437-4685	701-746-5767
Ayco Farms, Inc.	38	32	954-788-6800	954-788-5600
B.R.S Produce Co.	84	93	215-467-7180	215-467-7182
BelleHarvest Sales, Inc.	44	111	800-452-7753	616-794-3961
BelleHarvest Sales, Inc.	156	74	800-452-7753	616-794-3961
Bland Farms	134	125	800-VIDALIA	912-654-3532
Blue Book Services	169	6	630-668-3500	630-668-0303
The Brings Co., Inc.	122	126	651-746-2125	651-484-8857
H. Brooks and Company	123	127	651-635-0126	651-746-2210
Jack Brown Produce, Inc.	44	57	616-887-9568	616-887-9765
Bushwick Commission Co., Inc.	149	71	800-645-9470	516-249-6047
California Leafy Greens Marketing	159	82	916-441-1240	
Capital City Fruit Co., Inc.	36	17	515-981-5111	515-981-4564
CarbAmericas	38	37	954-786-0000	954-786-96785
Castle Rock Vineyards	35	128	661-721-8717	661-721-0419
Cavendish Produce Ltd.	145	12	866-770-3823	902-629-4339
CF Fresh	20	118	360-855-0566	360-855-2430
Chilean Avocado Importers Association	53	45	202-626-0560	
Clifford Produce Sales, Inc.	113	129	519-796-2199	519-326-5332
Colloiti & Sons, Inc.	88	85	215-389-3335	215-755-9616
Columbia Marketing International	153	36	509-663-1955	509-663-2231
Concord Foods	37	83	508-580-1700	508-584-9425
Coosemans Philadelphia, Inc.	85	94	215-334-3634	215-334-3636
Corona Marketing Co.	143	138	805-346-2114	805-346-8138
Corrugated Packaging Alliance	78		847-364-9600	847-364-9639
The Cranberry Network LLC	33	8	715-422-0410	715-422-0406
Crowley Maritime Corp.	139	104	800-CROWLEY	
CrunchPak	156	130	509-782-7753	509-782-0869
Crystal Valley Foods	38	35	800-359-5631	305-592-9803
Curry & Company	134	116	800-929-1073	503-393-6085
Customized Brokers	38	47	800-CROWLEY	
Cuyama Orchards	156	121	818-764-8682	818-764-4075
Del Monte Fresh Produce	176	79	800-950-3683	305-520-8495
Des Moines Truck Brokers, Inc.	140	52	800-247-2514	515-981-0923
Direct Source Marketing	135	136	914-241-4434	914-241-4435
Dole Fresh Fruit Company	109	3	818-879-6600	818-879-6628
Dole Fresh Vegetable Co.	2	78	800-333-5454	831-754-5243
dProduce Man Software	24	13	888-PRODMAN	650-712-9973
Duda Farm Fresh Foods, Inc.	INSERT	106	561-978-5714	561-978-5705
East Coast Brokers & Packers, Inc.	173	80	800-557-7751	863-869-9850
Farmer's Best	23	67	520-281-1411	520-281-4163
Fibre Box Association	68-69		847-364-9604	847-364-9639
Four Corners Farm	135	75	912-852-5098	912-852-5097
Fresh Taste USA	83	33	215-739-5057	215-739-5058
Frontera Produce	134	140	956-381-5701	956-381-5706
G & G Produce, Inc.	86	92	215-336-9922	215-336-9925
Garden State Growers	89	77	215-463-8000	
Genpro Transportation Services, Inc.	141	5	800-243-6770	973-589-1877
Gills Onions	22	72	800-348-2255	805-240-1932
Giorgio Fresh Co.	84	19	800-330-5711	610-429-3810
Gourmet Trading Company	38	38	310-216-7575	310-216-7676
Harvest Crown Co.	38	66	561-496-0390	561-637-0780
Harvest Sensations	38	41	305-591-8173	305-591-8175
Hess Brothers Fruit Co.	156	114	717-656-2631	717-656-4526
Highline Mushrooms	30	112	519-326-8643	519-326-7222
Honey Bear Tree Fruit Co.	156	131	800-551-6183	952-746-1316
Hunter Brothers Inc.	90	87	215-336-4343	215-336-4340
Idaho Potato Commission	147	134	208-334-2350	208-334-2274
Index Fresh of California	56	2	909-877-1577	909-877-0495
International Paper	70-71		901-419-4551	901-419-6897
J&J Distributing Co.	120	59	651-221-0560	651-221-0570
Jacobs, Malcolm & Burt, Inc.	38	43	415-285-0400	415-824-4844
E.W. Kean Co., Inc.	90	86	215-336-2321	215-336-1596
Kern Ridge Growers, LLC	24	113	661-854-3156	661-854-2832
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	135	115	717-597-2112	717-597-4096

COMPANY	PAGE #	RS#	PHONE	FAX
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	157	110	717-597-2112	717-597-4096
Keystone Fruit Marketing, Inc.	39	34	800-498-1577	717-597-4096
T.M. Kovacevich - Philadelphia, Inc.	81	95	215-336-3160	215-336-2866
Tom Lange Co.	26-27	73	217-786-3300	217-786-2570
M. Levin & Co., Inc.	93	122	800-523-1986	215-755-6757
LGS Specialty Sales, Ltd.	118	46	800-796-2349	718-542-2354
Maine Potato Board	146	54	207-769-5061	207-764-4148
Mann Packing Company, Inc.	11	1	800-884-6266	831-422-5171
Anthony Marano	175	28	773-321-7500	312-829-9426
J. Marchini & Son / LeGrand	35	68	559-665-9710	559-665-9714
Marzetti Company	13	48	614-846-2232	614-842-4186
Michigan Apple Committee	41	100	800-456-2753	517-669-9506
Minnesota Produce, Inc.	120	30	612-377-6790	612-377-3768
MIXTEC Group	36	20	626-440-7077	626-440-1557
Mor USA, Inc. / Devik International	92	132	908-753-0084	732-875-0056
Nardella, Inc.	94	90	215-336-1558	215-336-5757
New York Apple Association, Inc.	47	11	585-924-2171	585-924-1629
New York Apple Sales, Inc.	48	53	518-477-7200	518-477-6770
Niagara Fresh Fruit Co.	157	99	716-778-7631	716-778-8768
North Bay Produce	39	62	231-946-1941	231-946-1902
OsoSweet Onion Co.	136	50	877-579-7445	304-342-5022
Packaging Corporation Of America	72-73		562-776-1249	562-927-7752
Pandol Brothers, Inc.	35	4	661-725-3145	661-725-4741
Pandol Brothers, Inc.	60	16	661-725-3145	661-725-4741
The Perishable Specialist, Inc.	39	63	305-477-9906	305-477-9975
Philadelphia Fresh Food Terminal Corp.	101	51	215 336-3003	215-336-5542
Philadelphia Regional Produce Market	102	119	215-536-3003	215-336-5542
Pinto Brothers, Inc.	95	88	800-523-4047	215-336-5422
PMA Foundation for Industry Talent	15	123	302-738-7100	302-731-2409
Primavera Marketing, Inc.	157	58	209-931-9420	209-931-9424
Procacci Bros. Sales Corp.	87	76	800-523-4616	215-467-1144
Produce for Better Health Foundation	65	7	302-235-2329	302-235-5555
The Produce Marketing Association	161	9	302-738-7100	302-731-2409
The Produce Marketing Association	49	10	302-738-7100	302-731-2409
Produce Pro Software	93	98	630-3959600	630-572-0390
Progressive Marketing Group	39	61	800-900-0757	323-890-8113
Quaker City Produce Co.	82	139	215-467-5000	215-336-4416
Red Blossom Farms, Inc.	142	84	805-981-1839	805-693-0032
Rice Fruit Company	157	69	800-627-3359	717-677-9842
River Point Farms, LLC	135	14	541-567-4781	541-289-8123
Riveridge Produce Marketing, Inc.	43	109	616-887-6873	616-887-6874
Riveridge Produce Marketing, Inc.	157	65	800-968-8833	616-887-6874
Rock-Tenn Co.	74-75		770-448-2193	770-417-2356
Ryeco, Incorporated	86	91	215-551-8883	215-551-9036
SAGARPA - Embassy of Mexico	50-51	22	202-728-1729	202-728-1728
Ben B. Schwartz & Sons, Inc.	128	56	313-841-8300	313-841-1253
Setton Pistachio of Terra Bella, Inc.	164	44	559-535-6050	559-535-6089
Shuman Produce, Inc.	133	15	912-557-4477	912-557-4478
South Wind Farms	64	117	208-436-8164	208-436-8039
Southern Specialties	39	42	954-784-6500	954-784-5800
Spice World, Inc.	34	39	800-433-4979	407-857-7171
Stea Bros., Inc.	88	89	215-336-7806	215-336-2194
Sun Orchard Fruit Company	49	49	716-778-8544	716-778-8545
Sun-Glo of Idaho	66	97	208-356-9891	208-356-7351
Sunlight Intl. Sales/Jakov P Dulcich & Sons	59	81	661-792-6360	661-792-6529
Sunrise Growers	104	108	714-630-2050	714-630-0215
Tanimura & Antle, Inc.	29	135	800-772-4542	831-455-3915
Team Produce International, Inc.	39	64	800-505-0665	305-513-9596
Temple-Inland	76-77		512-434-5800	
Thermal Technologies, Incorporated	25	103	888-4-MRPEEL	803-691-8010
Trinity Fruit Sales	157	133	559-433-3777	559-433-3790
John Vena, Inc.	91	96	215-336-0766	215-336-2812
Village Farms	28	124	877-717-7718	610-429-6222
Wada Farms Marketing Group	63	70	888-BUY-WADA	208-542-2893
John W. Waleski Produce, Inc.	92	120	800-523-9990	215-336-2230
Washington Fruit & Produce	154	105	509-457-6177	509-457-6177
Well-Pict Berries	142	21	831-722-3871	831-722-6340
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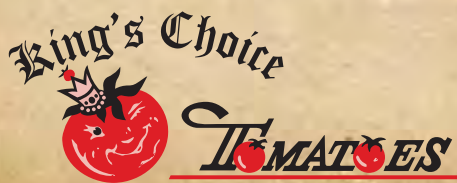
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Blast from the Past

Wholesalers and retailers across the Northeast wait with bated breath for the opening of the new Philadelphia Wholesale Produce Market (PWPM) next January. However, few, if any, are as excited about the new market as Mark Levin, CEO of M. Levin & Co. Inc., a fourth generation family-owned and operated wholesaler on the Philadelphia market.

Not only was Mark raised in the business, spending many an afternoon and summer surrounded by the hustle and bustle of the market — “I’ve worked in the family business since I was six,” Levin says — his grandfather, Michael Levin, who founded the family business, just happens to be the fellow who purchased the first tract of land to be included in the current Philadelphia Regional Produce Market (PRPM), then known as the Food Distribution Center. A press release, dated Sunday, January 26, 1958, one day prior to when the inset photo was taken, details, “...the Mayor had asked that his congratulations be tendered to Mr. Levin ‘for being the first Philadelphia processor to purchase a site in the Center.’”

The 3-acre parcel, which was purchased for \$75,000, would be home to “one of the largest and most modern installations in the United States for the storing, ripening, cutting, packaging, and wholesale distribution of bananas,” notes the release. To this day, “bananas are still the backbone of our business — we do 35 trailers a week,” acknowledges Levin. “Obviously, we have since branched out to have a full line of produce, but we still work out of the same building that my grandfather purchased. Once we move to the new market, we will again have

the most modern, technologically advanced ripening room that is available. In fact, even our new space, which includes two units on the market as well as six 24-pallet-ripening rooms, will not be large enough for us! We will still have to use our current ripening facility.”

Pictured above are the four gentlemen involved in the historic contract, including clockwise from top right, Mayor Richardson Dilworth, R. Stewart Rauch, Jr., president of the Food Distribution Center, Michael Levin and James “H.J.” Tate, president of the City Council. According to the release, they “will participate in a ceremony in the Mayor’s Reception Room at 10A.M. tomorrow (Monday) at which the final agreement of sale will be signed.”





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